THE

CONTRADICTION.

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BY

THE REV. WILLIAM COLE.

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MVSEVM
BRITAN
NICVM

PREFACE,

TO THE

READER in GENERAL.

WALKING, the laſt time but one I was in town, down Holborn, on the left-hand ſide, I ſaw a number of *Sermons*, bound up with a dirty ſtring, very duſty; but, though printed rather in the old ſtile, very plain. I looked on them, at the firſt glance, with great reſpect; and afterwards, on having peruſed a paſſage or two with a degree of veneration, I was about to aſk the "Seller of old

iron" (for I think they were under his locks, keys, &c. half hid) the price of them; when looking more narrowly I ſaw on the top *twopence* each.

Heigh! ho! then, *that* will not do, ſaid I to myſelf; and departed.

A few weeks ago I called at a Glaſs-Man's in I——ch, S——k. I eſpied a book, the very outſide of which attracted my notice—I opened it—I ſtarted!—Pray, Sir, is this to be ſold? Oh! yes, Sir, ſaid he, ſmirking, we ſell *every* thing in this ſhop: what did you pleaſe to want? we buy a vaſt quantity of ſuch *things*, we cannot do without them. Pray, my good friend, ſaid I, what

is

is the price of it? (I had but a guinea in my pocket, and was fearful of being thought, if I could not purchaſe it, impertinently curious). The price, Sir, ſaid he, the price did you ſay? I will tell you in an inſtant: Nancy, my dear, hand the ſcales—it comes, Sir, to—to—(weighing it) exactly fourteen-pence, two-pence halfpenny per pound.

This book, gentle reader, I have now by me—It appears to me to be ineſtimable, though it's title be *but —Philippi a Limborch, S. S. Theologiæ inter Remonſtrantes Profeſſoris, Theologia Chriſtiana—Ad praxin pietatis ac promotionem Pacis Chriſtianæ unicè directa;— Amſtelodami, Apud Henricum Weſtenium.*

It will not do then (ſaid I) to *print Sermons*,

or

Tranſlate Limborch!

Why not? Becauſe they will not defray the tithe part of the expence of printing. How ſo? Becauſe nobody will read them! What will the world buy? What books *will* they read? perſonal ſatires? and the petty triumphs of private gratified malignity? He whom no adequate object of reſentment has offended, ſhould not know the meaning of that word: yet what books will the world read? "Novels."—Is it ſo?—yet of what ſort? Very good, very high ſeaſoned? Perhaps ſo; but I *cannot* write them! Very bad, very immoral?

immoral? Poſſibly ſo; but I will not write *them*.

The world, however, the *polite* world, muſt be pleaſed — I muſt contribute ſomething to it's amuſement, or it will contribute nothing to mine.

Well then, let me attempt to *oblige* it,

Si poſſum, recte! ſed non quocunq' modo!

I write then, candid and *faſhionable* reader, to pleaſe thee; and can promiſe that the bill of fare I lay before thee, is one thou haſt never ſeen before—

What I offer thee "*is new!*"

Come then, let us ſhake hands together, like two little Mendozas juſt pitted againſt each other at Eton—*Thoſe blows can never hurt which are not pointed by malice!* And if thou giveſt me a good fair "licking" I will be the firſt, after I ſhall have "given in," to ſmile, with thee, at myſelf; perhaps thank thee; certainly, from my heart, forgive thee!

I repeat; What I offer thee is "New." I am not a Novel reader, or, by any means, a judge of Novel writing. I can only ſay, I ſhut my door with a ſolitary pen, and a few ſheets of paper, and filled them againſt winter for thee, as well as I could.

If

If thou ſhalt ſmile, perchance weep, be amuſed, be inſtructed, or any way be pleaſed, I ſhall, with pride, write thee down my debtor; if not, I ſhall have the pleaſure of being thine.

I beg the favor of thee to introduce me to thy acquaintance.

Gentlemen and Ladies,

'Pon honour "I mean not to offend you!" but if there have been clerical "Tippy Bobs" in the world — if Senſibility-ladies (old maids of courſe) will love their Florio-Fidelios—

If Surly Sams will be ſo deſperate as to marry Dutch women, and ſubmit to be hen-pecked by

their dear Van Damme's, Who can help it?

and if this Novel does not ſucceed, I ſhall be moſt incontinently ſorry that the *Vulgar* have no taſte,—

Yet who can help it?

Odi profanum vulgus!

But to thoſe of taſte without faſtidiouſneſs; of candor, without the ſtupidity of general *indiſcriminating* good nature; of diſpoſitions to accept any innocent amuſement, wherever they can find it; in ſhort, to all the faſhionable and *numerous* friends which this little impotent brat (ſent out to take it's chance in the world) is *ſure* to meet with, I beg leave to make my previous acknowledgments, and hope they will be as civil to him *as they can*.

Adieu!

Adieu! my little vagabond, (ſay what Cynicks pleaſe) the world is good-natured; there is much liberality in gentlemen; and as for the ladies (heaven bleſs them all with huſbands!) I love and know the ſex too well, to ſuppoſe they will pinch or ſnub an inoffenſive merry little boy, becauſe he tells truths now and then, or becauſe *I* happen to have been his father.

Farewell! gentle Reader; and I hope, *having read me through*, you will be able, without a frown, to return my good wiſhes, as civilly and as cordially as I preſent you, *gratis*, with mine.

THE AUTHOR, *&c.*

TO THE

PARTICULAR READER.

IF to the eaſy and goodnatured I have written familiarly in my firſt Preface, becauſe I admire frankneſs, and love good-nature, wherever or in whomſoever I find it; yet the ſevere though liberal, the impartial though candid, critic, claims, perhaps, a more diffident Preface, and may expect a ſort of deprecatory addreſs. As however in matters of the world, a *too mean opinion* of one's actions publiſhes (I will not ſay demonſtrates) an internal

internal radical defect ſomewhere, either in head or heart; ſo in matters of mental exertion, and intellectual aim, I cannot ſee how ſelf-abaſement conciliates eſteem; or an *over-acted humiliation* in the mother can tranſmute a deformed brat into a well-made beautiful child—I ſhall not, therefore, ſay I think this a pitiful, barren, deſpicable performance; as I am ſure on the other ſide, I can ſay nothing in favor of it: the latter would be vanity becauſe *it is my own*; to publiſh a conſciouſneſs of the former would be (if not to inſult the public) to expoſe myſelf to this mortifying queſtion, "Why then write?"

Let

Let me ſay, that the end and aim of all honorable exertions is to ſupport (indirectly, by moral or by example) "falling Virtue, and daſh Vice in his gilded car:" but if Virtue be *ſo* depreſſed with the weight of miſery and want, that ſhe can hardly lift up her fainting cheek from the pillow of pain, and dare not look up; if Vice ride ſo triumphantly and ſo high, that the laſh of the honeſt and indignant paſſenger cannot reach him; let us turn aſide quickly, and inſtead of ſtupidly and enviouſly gaping at the little bubbles of air his folly puffs around him, to amuſe the indolent and unthinking, haſten with anxious alacrity to the ſcene of unmerited diſtreſs; that if we cannot heal the wounds

fair

fair Virtue is ſuffering, we may, at leaſt, pour in oil to *mitigate* the ſharp agony they inflict; ſweeten a bitter potion with ſuch cordials of hope, that ſhe may drink it with pleaſure; and be a little, even though but a little comforted! Let us extract the thorn from her pillow, although on that pillow we know (alas!) ſhe muſt die! It will ever be an honor to us, a ſource of exquiſite delight, to know, that though we could not ward off the blow, we have, by every varied mode of encouragement, every additional incentive to patience, made her ſufferings *as light as we could*.

To be plain—We ſee, daily, in many profeſſions, in your's, in my own, in the clerical one particularly,

larly, that the Road to Advancement and Preferment is not always the road native honor and manly virtue *ought* to tread! Yet, alas! a desperate and irresistible necessity starves pilgrims too often into degrading compliances!

Honor, biting his lip, indignantly puts on a mask, and Virtue wears a *semblance* of content, while her heart, secretly bleeding, and agonized in every vein, goes on reluctantly in the way of the world, but dares not look back—Famine, more wretched than madness itself, close at her heels, is instant to goad her if she hesitate, and to stare her into stone! What can fair Virtue do? her lovely cherubs, her children of Honor,

clasp

claſp their helpleſs mother, and *rave aloud for bread.* But how are they to be quieted? how ſatisfied? Every hard-earned morſel they eat ſhe ſteeps with her tears; while what refreſhes them, extorted by ſome act of ſelf-abaſement or humiliating condeſcenſion, ſtabs her, through reflection, to the heart.

Thus, alas! kind Reader, the world goes, thus is neglected, half-famiſhed Virtue, too often *compelled* to ſubmit.

Oh! that ſome Angel of Light would deſcend, ſome ſupernal power would dart on the univerſe an irreſiſtible irradition of enthuſiaſtic liberality; reſcue from its penurious inſenſibility the *Heart of Man*;

and

and diſſolve the miſer, by a miracle, into tears!

Oh! let the liberal hand ſupport Virtue, that ſhe need not fall—to *prevent* her fall is "*ſuperior mercy!*"

What a wretch is the keen, the ſhrewd, the knowing, "the man of ſenſe," who walks *ſuch* a road as he ſecretly reprobates, for bread! but how contemptuous and contemptible the *great* man, who holds out a bribe near ſuch a path as the indigent *muſt* tread, and offers food to the hungry with *ſuch* a tone, as the ear of half-famiſhed Merit muſt liſten to, and *endure*, to obtain it!

Curſed neceſſity of dependence! curſed the pride of the wealthy world!

world! that *will* be fed by flattery, and not ſatisfied with leſs than the humiliation of indigent honor; with leſs than the degrading ſubmiſſions of the brave; than the negative *perſecution* of the "Good Man" in diſtreſs!

Mighty is neceſſity! ſometimes irreſiſtible by poor helpleſs human frailty!

But, when men in mere prurience of mind; out of inhuman coveteouſneſs; out of worldly ambition; men poſſeſſing many eaſy, and even elegant, comforts of life; in want of no real accommodations; aim at advancement in our profeſſion, or preferment in their's; proſtitute publicly their honor for patronage;

ſell their virtue for ſilver and gold; meaſure out and merchandiſe their liberal principles for "ſtock;" pawn a child; let out, perhaps, a wife to any *great impropriator*; and *thus* pave their ſhameleſs way, *thus* walk up to the "Bank of Mammon," and ſoar to diſtinction—Say, ſhould not they be held up (if vain) to the deriſion of the world? (if venal) to the deteſtation of all worthy men? (if panders) to the univerſal execration and indignation of mankind?

Let not the man of ſilent merit and uncontaminated honor fear to look into this mirror; he will not ſee *his* picture drawn in my "Brother's Travels." But let the venal one, poſſeſſed of *honorable* Preferment

ment by the vileſt means, daſh my mirror in pieces; for if he look into it, he will ſee himſelf: yet—his own hands have defaced the original; and if the image look horribly, the glaſs (to uſe a lady's term) *is not* "*in fault.*"—"My Brother" calumniates no one; he only produces into public thoſe who have "ſet the ſeal of diſgrace on themſelves"—My Brother would not have found ſuch characters, had they not exiſted—If ſuch characters *did* preſent themſelves, he had right to make a copy, to inſert them in his common place book, hold a mirror up to thoſe it might reflect, "and ſhew the body of the time it's form and preſſure."

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THE CONTRADICTION.

CHAPTER I.

Henry *and* Major G—.

TRUE, ſaid Major G—, true, my dear Henry; but it is not *your* road to preferment! Sir, ſaid I, earneſt to produce even to the laſt ſyllable my whole ſtock of argumentative artillery, yet catching but the word *your* of his aſſertion; Indeed, indeed, ſaid he mildly (*interrupting me*, and detecting ſomething in my eyes I was about to ſay, but ought not perhaps to have ſaid at all) it is not, believe me, *your* road to preferment! I ſtarted from him, I

ſpurned proudly his inſinuated recommendation! he preſſed with force almoſt juvenile my right hand in his, and (reſting on my ſhoulder) ſaid, with the very look of my noble father, Gently, Henry, be not impatient; I meant it was not a general, was not a *certain road to preferment*; I denied not ever that the road to true happineſs was ſtill the road of honor.

Permit me to admire what is doubly graceful in youth, that manly modeſt expreſſion of your opinions, which while it checks the intemperate conſciouſneſs of intellectual ſuperiority, paves the way to conviction, and ſmooths even through contradiction itſelf a paſſage to the heart of an opponent! I mean ſomething very oppoſite to the "malus pudor" of the Latins, or the "mauvaiſe honte" of the French! To me you have often ſubmitted—my experience indeed is as old

as

as my locks are grey; but as many things cannot be determined by mere reaſon, ſo more perhaps in my life at leaſt can only be certified (unhappily) by experience—I have had *my* misfortunes—You have often heard my brother mention Lady Cecilia F— the ſiſter in law of your dear mother at — (here he ſighed, but ſuch a ſigh as breathed a myſterious ſettled reſignation, rather than a ſuperficial unprofitable regret)—That tale, Henry, I may perhaps one day relate to you the particulars of; at preſent, it muſt not interfere, or induce me to procraſtinate what I have how to prove—Old men will be talkative, and (ſmiling) I am not young; but if you will leave the room awhile (I ſee my "Reformer" is coming, he will not detain me too long I hope) I will illuſtrate my meaning that the road *you* tread is not the road to preferment.—I ſhut the door.

CHAPTER II.

Interrupted by the Doctor, who talks learnedly, the Major, after a ſhabby pun, moralizes—the Doctor quits him, a little chagrined.

THE Doctor called—"May I hope, Major G—, that my experiment has ſucceeded—if the wound be dried up too ſoon, it will break out again incontinently; but I have thought it poſſible (under the ſecrecy you have permitted me to enjoin you) to check ſuddenly the ebulliency; yet infer that the ebullition, unleſs ſophiſticated and ſcientifically conglomerated, though Boerhaave, yes Boerhaave certainly I *allow*"—Doctor (ſaid the Major, interrupting him) I have an engagement on my mind, and you have many on your hands,

hands, therefore adieu for the preſent, (for I inſiſt that by to-morrow at eleven o'clock I have a circumſtantial account of that wretched exile's family at the Fen) and I hope to hear your experiment with *them* too has ſucceeded —(here the Major ſmiled, not a ſmile of pert ignorant contempt, but of throbbing doubt and charitable diffidence). Doctor, ſaid he, you have ſucceeded with me, for I was well all laſt night, no pain, not a melancholy hour, the night was hardly long enough—Well, well, 'tis well, ſaid the Doctor, ah! hah! (preſſing his forefinger on the very middle of his forehead) I have found it, *the medical philoſopher's ſtone*; then, Major, you had a comfortable night? You ſlept all night?

Gently, my good Doctor, I ſlept not a wink, though my body was not in pain; I thought not of my wound.—

Aye, aye, you uſed then, ſaid he, *my intercoſtal tonic*.—No, no, Doctor, I uſed a tone or two, but no tonic—What then, Sir, you, you, (looking in the very middle of his patient's eye) you did *not* uſe my tonic? No, Doctor, returned the Major (looking careleſsly at the phial placed near the table on a very old humbly-bound Prayer-book) I ſlept not a wink, though I ſat up from half paſt ten until four this morning.—Oh *then*, Sir, ſaid the Doctor, you had not, you *could* not have taken *my* anti-traumatical-gaſtrifical tonic! I know, ſaid he, (a little chagrined) what your *tone* then muſt have been—Yes (pauſing) ton! tone! tonics! yours muſt have been the tone of diſcontent, the tone of deſpair, a writhing anodynous, anti-ſudorifically-ſoporifical tone—ſuch tones as I almoſt hope that (had they occaſion, had they, I ſay, Sir, occaſion to take my tonics, and did *not*

take

take my tonics, viz. ſecundum artem mei ipſius compoſita tonica, et ſecundum artem meam ipſiſſimam admirabiliter adminiſtrata tonica) I almoſt wiſh all the whole tribe at the Fen might utter—Why, Sir, the very horſe-doctors admit the force, and admire the brilliant irreſiſtibility of them, either compound as in traumatic caſes compound, or as in your caſe, ad libitum *ſimpliciter* adminiſtrata tonica.—Doctor, (ſaid the Major kindly) time grows ſhort, give me your hand—I have credited your tonics, nor have they been of diſ-ſervice to me; but if I decline them, it is becauſe I feel they can be of no further uſe to *me!* To ſay truth, I declined them laſt night, and inſtead of your "tonics" for my externals, I took my own medicine *within!* my wound being eaſy, my mind was light; and (what I take preſages my death) not ſtung by *cowardly* deſpair, but gently

led up hill by a lively and animating reflection, I fluttered on the wings of hope between heaven and earth; I quitted in idea this old broken weather-beaten tenement, and called myſelf to account, expatiated widely into the field of action of many years paſſed away, purſed up the whole amount into a "tale of yeſterday," marſhalled my *actions*, ſummoned my humanity to the bar, and acted the judge over myſelf; ſaw many things which years ago made me bluſh, and waſh inſtantly with tears of manly ſincere contrition out of my memory, and (I hope) alſo out of the debt-book of heaven! Many things I ſaw, but feebly with my mental teleſcope, the *indecorum* of their images was loſt to my view—repentance had whitened my paper, blotted with juvenile and even anile ſpots, and preſented to me (my old heart trembles with joy as I utter it) a ſurface (I ſpeak as a

mere

mere man and a fooliſh old one) white as ſnow!!!

I ſprang up at the viſion with my ſolitary arm, ſat up in my bed, ſtruck a light, though not without much difficulty, ſeized hold on the "book of life," ('tis an old man's only cordial, Doctor) and having compoſed myſelf by private preparatory meditation, peruſed thoſe pages which gave me new life, rouſed my lethargic habit into ſpiritual action, enlarged my hope almoſt into enjoyment; exhibited ſuch a dreadful accountability of man at *firſt*, that I ſhuddered into nothing; relieved however almoſt inſtantly by infinite bleſſings announced unequivocally promiſed to "faithful ſervants" of all deſcriptions, that my conſcience "ſang a welcome" within me; an heavenly glow of *ſuperior anticipations* renewed my old withered cheeks; I ſaw the

gates of mercy open to my feet, that I was accepted, admitted, forgiven; that the old ſad act of an irreſiſtible neceſſity, and almoſt injunction of providence (a ſecret I ſhall not keep from you) was pardoned in compaſſion to miſguided, though intemperate humanity!

An ineffable ſenſe of gratitude chained almoſt the uſe of my tongue; the moſt animated hope exalted my ſpirits even to a pain—I could not with my mental eye bear the light of the ſun; I burſt forth into ſuch expreſſions and ſenſibilities as no one but a thankful heart could dictate; ſuch "tones," Doctor, as none but the moſt grateful voice, and a chriſtian aſſured of peace could utter, ſuch tones as ſprang not from a deſpair of your "tonics" doing me any good, or diſcontent at being, as I am, gently called away into a brighter

brighter field of action, where your "tonics" can be of no uſe, where—Here the Doctor abruptly looking at his watch, and with a critical, ſelfiſh, half good-natured ſmile, hinting I had forgotten the family at the Fen, took his leave, he ſhut the garden-gate rather harſhly, and it was obſerved ere he was out of ſight, ſtruck the ground with his ſtick, and looking ſideways, or rather half backwards, muttered diſcontentedly "Tonics!!!"

CHAPTER III.

Deſcription and anecdote of the Doctor—Story of poor Edward Baſſett.

THE Doctor was a good-natured, well-meaning, commodious, very ſucceſsful, but very unlettered practitioner; an irritable, poſitive, egotiſtical man—he ſpurred his nag more briſkly than uſual, and kicked away the oblique, though not unkindly-intentioned ſatire on his "tonics" againſt his ſides, not forgetting that he was on an errand of charity to poor Edward Baſſett's family-tribe at the Fen; from whom or on whoſe account he never would accept any douceur on account of a long, conſtant, and irkſome attendance on their general medical wants, and particular circumſtantial neceſ-

neceſſities, than that dear reward which a feeling heart deeply enjoys in ſacred privacy, on reflecting it has lifted up the proſtrate children of deſpair from the duſt, comforted ſhivering famine in the marſhes, reſtored an human being to itſelf, and healed the broken heart!

He once heard a wretched helpleſs outcaſt ſay, "Ah me! I cannot *afford* a doctor." While I live and can ſerve thee, by G—d that voice ſhall never be heard by me unpitied, unaſſiſted—for, etiam nolente diabolo, mea omnipotentia omnibus fœminibus atque viribus ſuperabunde curabunt tonica.

Poor Baſſett's children all yielded to an irreſiſtible conſumption, many, many miles from ſuccour, far from the rich or pitiful—the ſecond child, Godfrey, died of a fever on board a man of war, recommended by a noted gameſter,

ſter, ſteward to the earl of B——, in Oxfordſhire, as a bribe to poor Edward Baſſett to *ſell* his eldeſt daughter to "his honor." This propoſal Edward Baſſett retorted by a moſt ſevere beating, having broken the left rib, and I know not how, ſo affected the pander's lungs, that fearing an *indictment* for murder, (for it was reported to have been the caſe) Baſſett fled away half-naked at midnight, eſcaped to ſea, and is now employed by a whimſical concurrence of accidents in the ſervice of a liberal miſtreſs to all, the empreſs of Ruſſia. His poor diſtracted ever-faithful wife, of whom he had not then time to take a fond formal leave, or plan a future proviſion, died in St. Luke's or one of thoſe receptacles of deſpair, in the ſuburbs of the metropolis.

Poor

Poor Baſſett, thou ſhalt triumph at laſt, nor ſhall thy ſingular fortitude and eccentric goodneſs go unrewarded; but alas! Baſſett will never return to his country, the Doctor's hope of that is fallacious, though Edward's reward is ſure!!

CHAP.

CHAPTER IV.

Henry *musing!*—*Life of an exemplary Curate*—Henry's *affection to the Major.*

THE Apollo summer-house bell rang, where Henry for some time seated in a profound reverie, had ruminated near that old venerable fantastical cascade, on the position "It is not *your* road to Preferment!"—his mind had still bewildered itself in persisting the Major had said, or meant to say, "happiness."

There are hours (mused Henry) in which the mind of man, shaking off the clogs of prejudice, adores naked truth in silence, separates with a nicety which cannot be erroneous, bad from good,

good, pulls off the maſk which, carrying a look of joy, renders to an unobſervant eye the face even of vice attractive!

The eſſence of things remains unalterable!

Can I be happy, and not know it? I am moſt happy. My happineſs then (muſed Henry) ſurely ſprings from the innocent uniformity of my life, dealt out in acts of profeſſional merit! I have much to do, nor do there appear limits to my duty; nothing to reſtrain that ſimple yet earneſt deſire to do good to my fellow-creatures, thoſe eſpecially around my little obſcure, rural hermitage! I ſtep forth early in the morning, hail the labourer at his plough, return through my ſheepfolds, the cottagers I overlook, rebuke the lazy, ſingle out the induſtrious, ſee that all are at their wheels girt up for their reſpective employments,

ployments, return to my hermitage, devote a certain portion of time to theological enquiries, elucidate (perchance) an hidden truth, either reduce a Tillotſon, or even a Barrow, to the level of a common capacity, or what is more generally my practice, dreſs up with my plain and artleſs language, ſweet Religion in her native and heavenly ſmiles, (for I have few to rebuke) and thus render her path ſafe, pleaſant, and peaceful to all her votaries!

I act as a petty magiſtrate in my little diſtrict, and can ſay I have very few refractory ſubjects, not one reprobate chriſtian. Perſonally I have, yet want, nothing: how can my worthy Major ſay that I am not purſuing the road for happineſs, nay in the beſt, moſt palpable ſenſe of it, *preferment?* for ſurely whatever conſtitutes durable happineſs, whatever darts a conſtant

ſunſhine

ſunſhine on the human mind, exalts it far above ſublunary enjoyments, and leaves it half in heaven, deſerves the name of preferment indeed; and on a farther diſcuſſion my good Major will perhaps allow that the road I follow may lead *even* to *worldly preferment*. Church work is ſlow, Sir Roger ſays, but it may be therefore ſure! (the Apollo bell rang again) I attend thee, my honored Major, uſed with alacrity to obey thy commands, earneſt to prevent thy wiſhes! thou art poor almoſt as myſelf—the hut of poverty being but half-thatched ſhall for *that very reaſon* unite us more ſtrongly; we will ſit cloſe round our fire, and wedged nearer each other keep out the cold as well as we can, and cheerily warm our hands together!

CHAP.

CHAPTER V.

The Major advances, enters upon intereſting matters—Makes diſcloſures—Story of his love for Cecilia—*Hers for him—Further particulars—Relates his three vows—Major goes to reſt.*

HENRY, my boy, (ſaid the Major ſomewhat jocoſely, advancing) what! refitting your artillery againſt ſuch a weather-beaten, battered, unſophiſticating ſort of a man as myſelf? Sir, ſaid Henry, I have been ſomewhat impatient, but think on your own ground I can battle with you.—The Doctor is gone (ſaid the Major) with his "tonics" to the Fen, and if I miſtake not, full gallop; he has whetted the edge of my reaſoning talent, and I think I can cope with you ſtill—Come then, give

give me leave to detain you in the Apollo—The air will refreſh me; my wound is more painful than ever, but I know not how, talking to you, Henry, will relieve it—I have much to ſay, and ſhall preface it by telling you my three vows, which I mean to fulfil! Three vows? yes; but at preſent I ſhall tell you, if I can keep the ſecret, but two of them! You know (if not, know it now) that I never will marry; I will die a widower in *heart*.—Poor Baſſett's children I vowed if ever I was able, I would take care of, and if they died, the remnant of his neareſt relations in the pariſh; I received, alas! accounts a month ago, that he died of a provincial fever—his family I permit yet to hope, nor ſhall I reveal the fatal ſecret to them; I can bear to tell it to them (ſaid he, faintly ſmiling) after I am dead.—My third vow, which I can execute in your favor, I will, but at preſent ſhall only ſurpriſe you by

ſaying,

ſaying, I *am* able! In *my* favor, Sir? Yes, my Henry! a circumſtance turned out nine days paſt, which gave me new life, and induced me even at my years, to wiſh a ſecond youth, that I might ſhare my good fortune with one truly worthy of its participation—*yourſelf!!* You know I left you lately, about three days ago; you could only ſuſpect I was gone to London, but could not affirm the object of my journey—Your modeſty (though you preſſed my hand ſo warmly at parting I could hardly avoid telling you) forbade your taking advantage of my affection, and curiouſly prying into that particular! I will now tell you. I mentioned to you ſome time ago my (ah, no! awful Diſpoſer of all things, I bow down to thy will in ſilence) not *my* (continued he, looking upwards in ſubmiſſive agony as if for ſome ſtar fixed ſomewhere about the heavens, there ſhe is) not *my* Cecilia,

but

but—Lady Cecilia! Henry (ſighing) I loved her—I have much to ſay, but muſt be ſhort in telling a melancholy ſtory, which I ſhould take a wretched ſolitary pleaſure in lengthening out minutely and circumſtantially.—I *loved* Cecilia—I was thought by her venal friends not a proper, not a good match; my family not quite ſo honorable, my fortune by no means equal; *yet* to her I did preſs my ſuit—ſhe accepted me.—On the moment of our mental union, we embraced each other paſſionately, but ſteadily; ſhe lifted up her ſtreaming eyes to heaven: "Pardon me, thou Searcher of hearts, if I preſume to ſay, my faith and truth *ſhall never* die—Regiſter my vow in the courts above; I wed my Charles, I take thee for my future huſband; I am now thy *wife in heart*—may heaven preſerve us for each other, and may either that forfeits this troth, be an outcaſt from the temple

of honor, and abandoned by happineſs for ever!" So ſolemn an appeal needed no other confirmation.—We parted!

This ſecret, heaven knows how, evaporated through woods and wilds, and was ſoon blazed abroad. Envy lifted up her creſt; all the black and mean paſſions which the petty pride of worldly ſuperiority and fortuitous nobility of blood engender, roſe up againſt us! To be ſhort, I received an inſolent, hard-hearted, almoſt diabolical inſult from—may I utter whom? I could not put up with an inſult which involved my Cecilia—I according to the terms of ideot, ſanguinary, cowardly honor, received a challenge—I obeyed it, and alas! too fatal a markſman, at my ſecond ſhot deſtroyed my antagoniſt.—I received a wound in this ſolitary arm, which will never, Henry, *can* never heal! I fled to the Eaſt Indies, where

in

in an inſurrection I loſt (at one ſhot by a cannon ball) both my legs, as you ſee. Cecilia heard of it, but nothing could ſubdue her love!—Would I but return with the ſame "*ſoul*," ſhe would marry me, or if that ſhould be impracticable, ſhe would "*nurſe*" me (good God! what a word) to my eternal reſt, and never—never—never quit me! I recovered; my heart was whole. At laſt, after a few (to me 3000) years, I returned to England ſafe, but with the loſs, in an engagement with an Algerine, of my left arm! So you ſee, Henry, what a valuable friend you have, ſaid he, lifting up his two ſtumps, and with a ſmile (you can hardly believe it) kicking up the left arm and catching it as falling with his right-hand; but you ſee I am active yet at your ſervice—(Poor Major! his wound from this careleſſneſs became painful, it increaſed, he was ſick, he recovered,

and went on as well as he could). Henry (continued he) I flew to Cecilia; but the report, alas! met me too ſoon, that ſhe died nearly a year before I came to England! a fever ſeized her.—In her delirium, for hours together ſhe madly-laughing, uſed to ſcream out "My dear, my faithful Major!—ye ſhall never tear him from my memory, never ſhall ye *annul* my title to him, our marriage is regiſtered in heaven!"—This was enough—it was *too much*—I ſank into a chair at the inn where I firſt was ſtunned with the *blunt* news of it. —I was carried, they tell me, to bed, where I lay delirious for four hours, and was afterwards moved by violence up a long court, and lodged in an airy pleaſant little room, that ſilence might reſtore me to my ſenſes—This was the advice of my worthy little "Reformer," whom I ſaw by accident on his return from town at the Lion, and with whom

whom an acquaintance commenced, which has been now for ſome years improved, and will, I hope, continue uninterrupted.

My dear Cecilia's fortune was forfeited if ſhe died childleſs, or if ſhe married *me*—her cruel father periſhed by my hand—his will an attempt was made to ſet aſide, as iniquitous and illegal; but the law (they told me) was doubtleſs inexorable! I flew at laſt to this retreat, aſſured of being ever unable to regain, what, without my Cecilia, I could *never enjoy*. I retired from the world at once, as you know, contented with my little "Reformer's" continual perſonal attendance, but relieved moſt by your intellectual conſolations, by thoſe profeſſional cordials, which, adminiſtered by the hand of my deareſt honored brother's ſon, are

more effectually ſalutary, and *doubly* ſweet!

My dear Major, ſaid I, my profeſſional exertions have ever amply rewarded me, but never ſo light did my own wounds feel (for I have mine, I too keep by choice much at a diſtance from the world) as when I was pouring the balm of comfort into yours, with an affection I am bold, I am proud to call *diſintereſted*——

Diſintereſted indeed! (ſaid the poor Major) but, Henry, now you muſt not interrupt me—(here his heart throbbed as if impatient to advance a reſolution of executing ſome liberal and generous action)—My poverty was never diſgraceful to me; my old tattered regimental coat ſtill retains the viſible *epaulette*, ſanctioned by merit, may I ſay it, and won in the field of honor.

But,

But, Henry, my dear brother's ſon, let me reveal my *third* vow—It was, to preſent a ſubſtantial proof of my devoted eſteem to the firſt *dependant* man of your profeſſion, who would ſooner ſtarve (ſaid he, his eyes ſparkling with peculiar fire) than purchaſe Preferment at the expence of his good name. I have found a man, Henry—*yourſelf!!*

Hear me! I have watched you with the keeneſt eye; have known you to refuſe, though a ſtranger to liberal comforts of all ſorts, the bread of ſhame, the bribe of corruption: I have ſeen you ſteep ſilently with your tears of indignation a letter in which you ſpurned a profeſſional income, becauſe offered by the hand of a villain—I have never been unacquainted with your tender regard (though young) to my Cecilia, the leſſons of patience collected by your induſtry, culled by your

friendſhip, and adminiſtered with ſucceſs, though ſhe (alas! my Henry) died a martyr to her love.—To you, to you then will I fulfil this my other vow—I will give the living on our family eſtate (I am the only ſurviving *independant* branch of it, and I ſhall, ſighing, never marry on earth) to my faithful exemplary young paſtor, who may be then convinced, even by his own experience, that the path of virtue is indeed the road even to worldly Preferment, as it is always ultimately to that true and ſincere happineſs which is elaborated by ſelf-exertion, but endeared and ſanctioned by ſelf-approbation alone!

The eſtate my brother enjoyed, and like a brother, left entire to me, was put in my abſence into the *kind* care of Chancery—I was kept out of it, and taught that in conſequence of the "murder"

"murder" of my Cecilia's deſtroyer, (alas! that I muſt call her father ſuch) it was by ſome means or other impoſſible, unleſs I appeared on the third caution, I ſhould *ever* recover it.—Theſe letters found not their way, nor, had they, could I have attended! Life was then a burthen to me, with my two poor ſtumps, and this (I may ſay) death-wound in my right arm! In ſhort it was for more than fourteen months reported that I was dead; and being the only abſolute heir, that the eſtate ſlipped and devolved ſome way or other into (as they ſaid) another family of my name! Judge then, O judge, how great was my ſurpriſe, how unutterable my aſtoniſhment at my late ſummons to London, to hear that the father of one of my Cecilia's ſchool-friends had watched over my intereſts, had redeemed my eſtate out of the unfathomable gulph of the law, recovered it

for me, and reſtored it, though not without many and ſevere deductions from its original value!

The living, making near one half of it, is ſafe, is *yours*—The remnant then, if you will houſe your poor Major a few days longer of his almoſt (ah! poor Cecilia) too long a life; on theſe terms, Henry, the living, with the eſtate, is yours—Excuſe me, I muſt make my terms—I cannot live without you, I will not ſuffer any other hand to ſmooth my pillow, any other paſtor to cloſe my eyelids in peace. With it I conſecrate a lock to you of my hair—preſerve it—let your wife, if ever you marry, (you are not quite ſo old as I am) let your wife wear it conſtantly in her boſom, the ſignificant memorial of your virtues, and you muſt permit me to ſay ſo, of your old Major's warmeſt

warmeſt affection, and eternal gratitude!

Sir, (ſaid Henry, ſeizing his hand) may you live long to enjoy, what if we enjoy not *together* will have (unleſs when my flock partake of the fatneſs of my paſtures) little, Major, very little reliſh!—I like not exactly, I like not all this ſudden road to Preferment; though it increaſes my happineſs, to be thus patronized, honored by thee!!

What, not intoxicated with good fortune, Henry! (ſaid the Major in a lively tone) but you have certainly forgotten to aſk me for my proof; though my wound pains and ſickens me ſo much that I have not time juſt now, even were the air leſs damp, to give it —"*Yours* was not, generally ſpeaking, the road to Preferment."—Come then, let us retire, it is late; ſhould my

"Reformer" call and find me out at ſo dangerous an hour, he would deluge me with his "tonics"—and then, Henry, he would prefer me (ſmiling) rather ſooner than you wiſh!—Good night, my lad of honor, and may your ſleep be ſweet; but dream not of *Mitres!*—I ſhall enter on my taſk tomorrow, if I live; but my wound is beginning to be more painful—I had almoſt forgotten it, I have neglected it, I have been thinking more of my Cecilia, and of thee.—Help me to my room—hand me my Prayer-book, and—good night.

* * *

CHAP-

CHAPTER VI.

New converſation—a retroſpect to Cecilia *—a reſumption of the argument in queſtion.*

GOOD-MORROW, my worthy Major, how have you ſlept? Well, Henry; ſoundly, my boy; but I fear, ſaid he, (ſmiling) I ſhall never arrive at twenty-one, after a few years *childhood recommences*. Surely, Henry, ſurely the comforts, the confidence which ſprings from Religion, renews the body itſelf, gives vigor even to a Macklin! My heart ſtands tiptoe glancing through the vale of this world into the comfortable proſpect of an happy futurity! My dreams, I am ſure, I know not why, preſage my death, I mean *—life immortal!*—But come, a truce to the

the pulpit, let me prop up once more this weather-beaten tenement, and to "breakfaft with what appetite we may" —That Wolſey, my boy, was a miſerable man in his old age, he built on a ſandy foundation, he followed the *very road* to Preferment, but that, alas! did not lead to happineſs. Apropos, let us to the Apollo, and in converſation with you, let me loſe the ſenſe of my wound, let me obliterate from my memory all diſagreeables, and forget, if poſſible, my Cecilia!—Forget? no—never—never—never—never!

Having adjuſted his ſtumps, and wiped away a tear which I ſaw ere he was aware, trickling down his placid, venerable countenance, and given orders that no one ſhould diſturb us 'till dinner, and that now, even his "Reformer" ſhould not be admitted, Henry,

ry, (ſaid he) "Yours is not the road to Preferment!" — Not the path you have walked in, but the road of diſhonour conducts too often, too certainly, to ſucceſs in the world.

CHAP.

CHAPTER VII.

History of the Major's honored brother—His character—He travels—Makes an important experiment.

MY dear, honored brother, your ever-to-be-lamented father, was a man of an inquisitive turn of mind, he had his merriments, his gibes, his fancies—

To see the world we should be above it!

The poor cannot afford to make experiments, or lose that time in idle unprofitable observation, which is better consecrated to the attainment of solid advancement in professional knowledge, which in general providentially brings forth fruit, I mean bread!!! My brother took orders for the sake of

of a good living which he inherited in W—ſhire. He was rather in deed, than in dreſs "a Clergyman;" he was alſo a man of nice honor, and could only reconcile it to his conſcience to wear thus loofely, thus obliquely purchaſe the "cloth" by letting his tithes in the moſt eaſy manner; by accepting not what is ſometimes termed "a fair valuation," but what his happy innocent ruſtics *offered*, and by giving up one half even of that to the occaſional diſtreſſes of his fellow-creatures, his friends, the poor!—"While I am on my travels, ſaid he, to viſit the hearts of men, the wretched ſhall have no reaſon to lament my abſence—I will prevent the tear from riſing; no heart ſhall ſigh, for no heart ſhall be broken; and while I reward the induſtry of my faithful deputy, and gratify his humble ambition (much more is he to me ſuperior in merit, than I to him in fortune)

tune) I ſhall expatiate more freely; ſhall have no obtruſive retroſpect, unprofeſſional ſolicitude; and if my obſervations and remarks ſhall amuſe my dear Major, or hereafter be of ſervice to his nephew, I ſhall not think I have mixed the dulce utili in vain."

I ſaid, Henry, "To ſee the world one ſhould be above it"—My brother however thought otherwiſe—he choſe to wear the threadbare coat of poverty, to aſſume the mendicant tone of complaint, to appear (what he was not) a "*diſtreſſed clergyman*," of pointed character, and liberal activity, of an humble ambition to recommend himſelf to the notice of the little great, and great little men of the world, to the friendſhip of Patrons and Patroneſſes; *thus*, viz. *by doing his duty as a conſcientious divine, and man of ſubſtantial honor*, to ſee and to prove, whether a road *thus* marked

marked out, and *thus* trodden, led to favor, to *Preferment*.

The characters he met with, (here the Major requeſted me to take out of his left pocket a bundle of letters) I ſhall now read to you, and ſpeak in the firſt perſon of a man who travelled ſome few years in a ſhort time, to note the practices of mankind and to—Henry here interrupted him, Sir, it will fatigue you? No—no, Henry, ſaid he, beſides I defy you to read my poor brother's hand.—That ſo miſerable a penman ſhould have ſo excellent an heart! Hands and hearts do not always (I am told) go together—Yet poor Cecilia's hand and heart went—alas! (ſighing) would have gone together—But come, come, ſhaking his forehead as if to diſlodge a tear that ſeemed doubtful whether it ſhould retreat or not—(*let* it fall, Major, ſuch tears do

no

no diſhonor to human nature) come, come, let us to—to—yes, here it is; the firſt dated early after he had ſet out—

The Major opens his brother's letters, which explain, progreſſively, the characters he met with in life.

LETTER I.

May 3rd. *W—ſhire.*

" Dear Major,

" I SHALL not detain you with idle prefaces, but as I mean to be very buſy, introduce my characters and their proofs—Some, peradventure, you may be ſhocked at, others diſguſted with; you may ſmile with others, but will condemn all ſuch as ſhall have " ſet the ſeal of diſgrace on themſelves." It is the way of the world, the way to gain Preferment, to flatter, to honor, to—

to—No! they ſhall ſee and find that a diſtreſſed *Gentleman Clergyman* ſhall deſpiſe it, and, by expoſing bold truths, hold up the mirror to perverted nature, to ſhew how unnatural ſhe is! That Preferment never can proſper, that Preferment degrades its poſſeſſor, which is not purchaſed by the effects of honorable perſeverance, the energy of intellectual induſtry, the exertions of eſſential virtue, and *unſullied* innocent profeſſional ambition!

"I begin with a fat, modern, beneficed Rector—His policy to gain preferment—His ſucceſs, and how!!

"The firſt gentleman I called on was one of my own profeſſion, a modern beneficed Rector. He had unequivocally *eaten* himſelf into a well-conditioned living, was bloated, rather aſthmatic, very dirty, except that his wig

was

was moſt enormouſly orthodoxical, and particularly well powdered. I muſt explain to you the above—his having *eaten* himſelf into a fat living.

" His Reverence had laid it down as a good rule, and as the direct road to Preferment, *to chime in with the ſocial propenſities of mankind*; to eat and drink with them in *their own way*, and not to be too proud to his inferior laity. He preferred, however, "gormandization," was an idolater of a certain decent, commodious fiſh, called a turtle, and worſhipped the culinary image wherever he *nozed* it put up.

" How much depends upon mere accident! there is more in a *ſavory diſh* than ſome lean ignoramus's (who never were *ventriculated* at St. John's) imagine. What ſays Weltjie?—His Reverence ſat fortunately at a ſnug meeting, next

next to Mr. E——y, a friend of old Alderman S——d, who had brought him up to *good living!* they callapaſh'd and callapeed it together, became dear aſſociates, ate together very often indeed, ever amicably bolting on all choice days; and it muſt be confeſſed, *equally* divided the haunch's fat, fairly and honeſtly too.—One day, tète á tète, or rather, gut to gut, in a certain time of cibarious diſtreſs, as they were eating "putting up with" mock-turtle, Ah, (ſays the preſent Rector) my friend, my good friend E——y, how often —but—alas—dear me—how years *do* paſs, how often have we *lived well* together!—This mock with a friend ſuch as you, my E——y, may be tolerable, may be *ſomewhat* of the "thing;" but the real, the real, my honored meſſmate, we ſhall never, no never, alas! eat ſo charmingly together again—Why not? ſaid E——y, (comforting him)

your

your appetite is not ſo keen as mine, I have the *advantage* of you, I am "conqueror" you know; but we will enjoy ourſelves many a year, and oft, I will warrant you—I have ſtaunch friends yet in Jamaica, who *love* me. Oh, fear not! I'll find, *I'll* treat, nor ſhall any one fill your chair, or ſay grace, but your dear ſelf, but my honeſt, d——d good natured fellow of a parſon!—Sir, to be plain (ſaid his Reverence) I am in debt, and fearful of being arreſted every hour.—Arreſt? ſaid E——y: my purſe—my purſe (his chops falling about 86 per cent.) is *totally*, and conſcientiouſly I ſpeak it, taken up in my kitchen; we muſt live, you know, while we do live: but, come, if that pragmatical fanatic (a moſt excellent man, though only three years older than yourſelf, Henry) will but be off—(he has thrice been given over—he cannot live till next tithe-day) his living—his living,

on

on ſecret conditions between us (beware of Simon Mag's trap) you underſtand me, unleſs (ſmiling) you are one of the *bolters*, ſhall be yours, as I hope to eat none but Wright's veniſon! 'Tis yours that inſtant. Now, I ſay, cheer up, cheer up, then, this moment!—A pauſe of ſurpriſe on the Divine's ſide, and ruminating, retracting heſitation on the other, delayed the fraternal embrace a moment—they then ruſhed into each other's arms—they wept, they drank to each other eternal friendſhip, eternal ſociety; prayed only juſt for ſound palates in good order, that was all, and then hearty fellowſhip to each other, and—Amen.

"P. S. Poor F——y died in leſs than three weeks—E——y made out the preſentation—Dr. —— is the preſent Rector in A——y, W—ſhire, and thus *ate* himſelf into Preferment.

"Let

" Let the man come in (I heard his pompous voice) for me for to ſee him; I like *to look a perſon through.* Well, Sir, ſo you are come for this here curacy of mine, I ſuppoſe?—I nodded in the genteeleſt manner I could, " Yes, Sir, if you pleaſe."—Sir, ſaid he, the biſhops let in any body now—Do you come from any Aniverſity?—From Cambridge univerſity. U—Univerſity, Sir! how ignorant are your country curates! why you are not likely to ſerve *me* well, who miſ-pronounce your *almo* mater! Do you *read*, Sir?—for if you don't know nothing, you won't never do here.—I flatter myſelf, Mr. Rector, (ſaid I ſomewhat firmly) if you honor me—Sit down, you *may* ſit down (ſaid he ſomewhat mildly) that I ſhall give you " ſatisfaction."—Sir, ſaid he, ſtarting up—trembling—ſpitting in the fire, and taking out nimbly his tobacco-box, Satisfaction, Sir? I do not mean to defront

defront you, nor nobody elſe, not I, Sir. Mr. Rector, (ſaid I) I have taken no offence.—Mr. Curate, *then*, ſaid he, fitting down ſlowly, and recovering himſelf, (in compliment to his alarm I affected to tremble too) I fear your tone is too ſtiffiſh, too authoritative for *my* pariſh.—I love to ſee the minor clergy, curates in particular, humble.—Sir, I gave my laſt "hack" ſixty pounds, as he was a poor relation, out of my income, ſuch as it is (£700. per year by the bye, ſaid the Major) I will try you, however, at fifty-five pounds—or, ſtep out, (you are dry, I ſuppoſe,) a few minutes, and I will ſee what I can afford you, I will think of it.—I could bear, dear brother, no more—his ignorance a little ſurpriſed me, but his inſolence overpowered me—"*This is worſe than even French Fraternity;*" I jumped up, and forgetting my gown and my poverty, "Sir, how dare you inſult a gentleman,

 becauſe

becauſe unbeneficed? You are a perri-wig-pated, bloated, penurious glutton, and Phariſaical hypocrite, and may be, &c. &c.

" I croſſed the road briſkly, ſeized my Roſinante (for I rode in ſtile) from the hovel where I had left him, determined to pen this down as ſoon as I could. Adieu!

Yours, dear Major, &c.

LETTER II.

An old ſeaman not of the right ſort—Major's brother ſoon quits him.

" Dear Major,

" I PROCEED to relate my travels. I obtained at a village near the ſea-ſide, a curacy—The man of power was an old ſeaman, who cared not a thimble-full

full of flip *who* had it, ſo he would try me a trifle, though my ſails were a little ſhivered (my coat threadbare)--he never went to church himſelf, for his part—he reſpected the conſtitution as much as any man, but this was a land of rational liberty, and he would not be forced, not he—and parſons, unleſs when they brought their *jolly boat* with them, always ſomehow made him melancholy; but he inſiſted on my nabbing biſcuit (dining) with him after ſermon on preachifying days, not but that he would lend me a hand on a pinch, any other day if I called on him!

"Lieutenant R——y had been a ſailor, but was a brutal one! he was tyrannical, purſe-proud, void of that national humanity, that fine raſh openneſs, that "univerſal welcome" which marks and enlightens the face of an Engliſh ſeaman! In ſhort, every bit

you ate he looked on as a gift, courted your company *ſelfiſhly*, and unleſs you ſmoaked, drank like an honeſt, hearty one, with him, would inſult you behind your back, on leaving his houſe, for a ſneaking, methodiſtical fanatic! Him (dear Major) I very ſoon took my leave of, finding that unleſs I degraded a man into a brute, proſtituted my cloth to groſs ſervilities, by profanation of all honorable, delicate, dignified ſentiments, I ſhould not perhaps long retain the Preferment even of a forty pound curacy—I gave him no warning, but heard his old favorite whom he once *turned away* in a drunken fit for diſobedience of convivial orders, and with whom he had quarrelled an hundred times, over his bowl at two in the morning, was reinſtated on his *proper* apologies, among the curſes of the ſlaves of the village, in an appointment which for five years he had done ſo much

much *honor* to, and ſo conſcientiouſly deſerved too.

" Adieu, dear Major! you ſee I have not yet chimed in with the humours and paſſions of mankind; I have not yet found out the road to Preferment, &c.

Here, Henry, unfold the two next; the laſt is a long one, which nevertheleſs I am reſolved, it does ſo much honor to my dear brother, to read through myſelf! but let us take chocolate—*You* take it, I mean.—I muſt take ſome of my " Reformer's " advice. Hark! the bell rings; the Doctor, I ſuppoſe, himſelf! Sir, ſaid George, entering, the Doctor called in a hurry, will ſtep down a moment to the Apollo.—How is he, George? Sir, in unuſual ſpirits.—Good noon, Major (ſaid the Doctor) how did you ſleep? Indifferently well—Henry has been my phyſician this

 morning.—

morning.—What news? The worſt, ſaid the Doctor, in a common ſenſe, the beſt in event—two of the children (I think the twins) died yeſterday; of the reſt I have hopes that they may live, and (but I can *promiſe* nothing) triumph over their maladies through the medium of the tonics.—They want for nothing, they bleſs their honored Major morning and evening! Poor Edward Baſſett! Periſh the infamous ſteward, the cauſe of his exile—but, Major, your wound; you ſay nothing of it. I have laid in, ſaid he, and "am as well as can be expected," and pleaſe Heaven ſhall ſoon be laid out! but good day! your time is precious—dine with us to-morrow—leave word with George that I muſt not be interrupted.—Adieu!

Come, Henry, (he is off you ſee) read, if you can, my brother's next (poor fellow, I wiſh he was alive to relate

late it) to me—the laſt I ſhall lay in wind and read myſelf—I will relieve guard, ſaid Henry, when you will (for there appear to be more letters than you have calculated)—but now to my poſt.

LETTER III.

Surly Sam, Eſq. *a ſtop-hound fox-hunter*—Little Luke—Van Damme—*The way of the world.*

" Dear Major,

" I PAID my next devoirs to a fox-hunter, who did not correſpond ſo well with the character of an Engliſh ſportſman as I could wiſh—He was mean, vulgar, immerſed in dirt metaphorical and real—he was alſo hen-peck'd, and obtained the name through his domains of the " ſtop-hound " fox-hunter, from his ſtopping and drawing off at half paſt two o'clock, (in terror of his wife's

menaces) though in full chace. He was once a ſtable-boy, but roſe by miraculous contingencies a little above the equeſtrian order, and (poſt multa pericula fronti) dared to marry a fat and bloated, pimple-faced, ſquat, Dutch woman, who excelled in the diſcipline of the tongue, which Surly Sam was more in dread of than a boggy marſh, or double-ſet hedge. Often uſed he to ſay, if I do but break my neck I ſhall get rid of my dear Van Damme. I called on this ſtop-hounder moſt unluckily on Sunday, for the hyp generally bit him very ſeverely, on that (ſhocking, Harry!) "d——d diſagreeable uſeleſs day."

"On accoſting him, Sir, I preſume—Sir, ſaid he abruptly, I beg you will call for what you want, I muſt wait on poor Cadet, and will be with you in an hour or leſs, (poor gentleman! his daughter

daughter is dying, I ſuppoſe, ſaid I to myſelf). He left me; in about five minutes I heard (what I know not how, ſhook my nerves moſt unpleaſantly indeed) a confuſed yell of his hounds, who all knew the maſter who loved *them* "a d——d deal better than his wife."—At laſt he returned. I ſuppoſe you *want* for to come for to preach here, don't you, Sir?—I bit my lip—I heard you wanted a curate, Sir. Yes, I want a lift for a ſhort time, till Little Luke was got made ordained—(Little Luke, Major, was a notorious pickle, the old huntſman's ſecond ſon, to whom Surly Sam, Eſq. had long ago promiſed the living.) I bit my lip again, yet ſmiled inwardly. *This is your ſort*, (as the play has it) this is the road to Preferment, dear Major!

"To be ſhort, (for poſtage of letters is expenſive) I ſtaid, I preached to dead

walls for ſome time, ſick to death with what I heard and ſaw.—His dear Van Damme uſually went, or was *carried* to bed at eight o'clock—then his honor broke covert, and his ſhackles. I avoided always as much as poſſible, his ribaldry, by being moſt attentive to his hounds. Poor Cadet, the beſt hound in his pack, has often excuſed me from hearing, what is, in nature, the moſt diſguſting and unentertaining to any man of taſte and feeling, ſuch ſongs as no one but M— would write, or T—— ſing!

" Come, Parſon Prim, ſaid he one evening, Cadet is recovered, and while my Little Luke is gone to colidge *for* to be ordained, you ſhall hunt my hounds! hah! hah! burſting out into a fit of moſt outrageous laughter, how cheerily, how che-he-he-che-he-he-rily (renewing his monſtrous howl) my little

little dew-lappers will run—Nothing like a ſpunky Reverence to head them, excepting Little Luke; and he will ſhortly (with the bleſſing of G-d) be a Reverence too, or it ſhan't be none of my fault; all I ſay is as that. So if you will *ſwear* to hunt them like a good ſtaunch parſon, (none of your milk-ſop mealy-mouthed ones, Cadet never heeds none of them, or any of her breed) like a *proper* man, I will e'en benefice you with the curacy, and you ſhall the firſt two months Little Luke takes to them again, go halves, and we touch (between ourſelves) nothing leſs than half-a-crown at the end of the chace, if it finiſh before half paſt two o'clock.—Nay, come, my tight-one, in hopes you will *take pains*, and do your beſt in the field, and help Little Luke at firſt holding forth, I will, on liking, give you at the rate of five pounds per year addition, at leaſt for the firſt quarter,

beſides a good jolly-day (you merry dog) or rather night, for we will keep it up (d—n it but we will) after Little Luke returns from colidge with his teſtamentals after his *animation*, (beſides we muſt *ſeaſon* him with a wet congratulation). You ſign his qualification of courſe, as *knowing* him: you ſhall ſign laſt in capitals.—I heſitated—Indeed, Sir, (I could hardly hold in, dear Major) it requires—What, Sir—What, Sir—do you heſitate? d—n me, nothing never ſhan't ſtop me; and as for *you*, no punch, no rino, no fun, in ſhort, no—nothing! to refuſe Me is not to do well, is not the great road, Sir, to Preferment of this curacy, Sir! I darted a look of low-lived contempt, he could underſtand no other language; your Little Luke (your hounds I reſpect, becauſe they do their duty) your Van Damme, and all your crew, may—and, &c. Major, I have hardly yet recovered

vered myſelf, but am ſteadily yours, &c.

" P. S. God forbid my dear Henry ſhould do what his father diſdained, abhorred! Had I — but periſh the thought!—I begin, however, to *detect* the road to Preferment.—But may the baſe hand wither which accepts a ſhameleſs bribe from a villain! That villain will ſoon be the firſt to proclaim the terms of your diſhonor, blaſt the charitable hope which even ſevere repentance might offer, expoſe his victim to the cruel world, and (carrying deadly proof and poiſon in his hand) publiſh an authority for immortal ſcandal!—I thank Heaven, I did not ſo obtain my living in W—ſhire. Adieu, &c.&c."

Bravo! ſaid Henry, my honored father, your ſon will never diſgrace you!—If I ſtep out of your road, may I fall

I fall into the mire, fathoms deep!—But, dear Major, you forget your "tonics." No, no, Henry, ſaid he, faintly ſmiling, they are of no uſe—Sir, ſhall I read? No, I can manage the next, for I find more than I expected—Here it is—But you, in thinking for me, forget yourſelf—What ſay you to a biſcuit and a glaſs of mild cherry? No, Sir, I am attentive!

LETTER IV.

A ſenſibility-lady—A Florio Fidelio—An epitaph highly ſeaſoned in red ink, *by expreſs deſire, and why.—A little ſnub at old maids.*

"Dear Major,

"I AM at a large diſtance from Surly Sam, Eſq. and his canaille, and have found out a patroneſs in L——ſhire. I am impatient to give her cha-

racteriſtic.

racteriſtic. She was a ſort of delicate enthuſiaſt, *ſhe liſped*, was very affected, full of ſenſibilities, yet hard-hearted: generous, alas! where ſhe ought not, where nature revolts at generoſity; ſhe idolized the Egyptian Anubis, and was enamoured of all the "dear creatures," but more particularly of a monkey lately named after a favorite dog (half a lap-dog) ſhot by his grace the Duke of Q——y's gamekeeper — Florio-Fidelio, "the dear delicious creature." My firſt ſalutation was "Kind, learned Sir, do you write Ipitaphs, Ipitaphs in *verſe?* for (weeping) I have loſt, oh, my wretched ſenſibility! yet is ſenſibility, ſay what they will, the charm, the roſe of life! Yes, Sir, here is a lock taken from him; you know, Sir, (*liſping*) he could not, the dear creature could not feel, being dead, cut off from the ſweet delicious breaſt of my Flo-ho—Fi-hi—Flo-ri-o—Fi-de-li-o. (Here the

the ſervant was called in, and I was deſired to ſtep up ſtairs into the drawing-room). It was but decent. *Ladies ſhould not faint in public!*

" In a quarter of an hour ſhe came up—the queſtion was repeated—Do you write Ipitaphs in verſe? in metre, truly comfortable and apropoſly canine? I will try, Madam, (bowing) to —Try, Sir?—I ſhall not be ſatisfied with your trying!—Doctor Deſperado-Sangrado del Toboſo, a phyſician-extraordinary, tried to ſave my loſt friend, I believe however he would make but an indifferent dog-doctor, and you know, if he cannot ſave a dog, he cannot any of us! Madam, (then ſaid I boldly) I *can* pleaſe you, but it is a feeling, a very trembling melting ſubject; if I begin I ſhall not be able to reſtrain my ſenſibilities on *ſuch* a *topic*.

—Dear

—Dear man, dear Sir, (ſaid ſhe, half in raptures) you ſhall have my church; call again very, very, very ſoon—the pariſh cannot reſiſt my recommendation, the pariſh is nearly my own—Away, Sir, no time is to be loſt, my poor heart already beats, my ſenſibility is riſing, I muſt retire, ſooth my widowed throbbing boſom, and pay (content to ſubmit to the decrees of providence) the laſt tribute a grateful tender friend can pay, a feeling encomium to his precious ever-ſmiling, everlaſting memory. Ah, my poor dear, dear poor, Florio Fidelio! adieu, Sir, for I poſitively muſt retire! Write a ſenſibility Epitaph, full of pathos, full of melting regret, full of, dear Sir, your Reverence's delightful, poetically-prurient, pregnant, parturient imagination.

" Ah!

"Ah! how we all like flattery, the beſt, the ſurlieſt of us! ſhe (ſmiling through her tears like Andromache in Homer on Hector's kiſſing and taking leave of the little affrighted Aſtyanax) curtſied low, and with a ſort of languiſhing, tender female frown, Adieu, Sir!—the ſweet Ipitaph! may the Muſes elegantly proſper you, the dear muſical Muſes. Adieu! but write in *red ink, it will look you know as if the heart had been bleeding*. Adieu—for a day!

"I went to the King's-Head, retired to my room, and ſoon produced the following *ſhortiſh* epitaph. Epitaphs ſhould be ſhort, Major (may it be long ere yours be written) on the Senſibility Lady's departed friend. I ſobbed out juſt as I left her, his name, ſo that ſhe heard it.

On

On the Florio Fidelio,
Departed Jan. 11, half paſt Six o'clock.

HOW faſt my tears for all my joys are flown!
Florio Fidelio, deareſt dear, is gone.
Yet ah! alas! alack! and well-a-day!
What can I do? what can Cordelia ſay?
All other dogs I will for ever hate;
Hear, Traveller! my vow; and weep his fate!
So ſweet a dog ne'er wagg'd his tail like this,
So ſweetly talk'd, or gave ſo ſweet a kiſs!
Sweet were his actions, paſſions, all ſo ſweet;
Sweet was his hair—to comb it was a treat.
Ah! is he dead? No, no, he ne'er ſhall die!
Die all the dogs on earth, die mortally:
Florio ſhall flouriſh, ever honor'd be,
Quite the Fidelio of Fidelity!

What think you of my brother's almoſt extempore compoſition? but I will not interrupt you, read on—"I poſted over the road with my credentials to ——, ſhe was walking, mincing her ſteps near the ſhrubbery. I gently interrupted her—My Florio, ſaid

ſaid ſhe, (fantaſtically) oh pardon me, Sir! (curtſeying) I am always converſing with him.—Sir, is it poſſible!—have the Muſes been ſo rapid, then, in their communications?—Madam, (ſaid I ſomewhat adroitly) every thing ſhould be done moſt rapidly to gratify the "Paragon of Senſibility!" She bluſhed—I read my epitaph—ſhe wept, palpitated, fainted, recovered, and on that inſtant ſaid, Sir, you are my curate for ever and ever! I will ſpeak for you to-morrow. I have, however, another favor to aſk of your unbounded ſenſibility, and delicate feelings—(here ſhe ſmirked half-timidly, wildly, ſhe tremblingly heſitated, looked white, looked red, looked like a cameleon, as if terrified aukwardly out of her ſenſes, yet determined to put the queſtion) reverend Sir, at night (and, dear Sir, I ſhall *conſider* you) I mean to *ſmuggle leave to bury him*, my Florio, my own

Florio-

Florio-Fidelio, in the chancel.—I ſtared —I ſtarted back.—Sir, I will make your curacy guineas for pounds, and kind Sir, I hope you (may I utter it, Major) *will do duty over him!* I was giddy in a ſecond, I tottered with all the mixed paſſions of diſguſt, horror, and aſtoniſhment.—I pretend not to *her* ſenſibility; but I was near ſinking —I ſhould have ſunk had I not been nearly petrified.—In my trance I heard her ſay (now I recollect it) "Men in rags, Lazaruſes, particularly begging parſons, muſt not be over-delicate!" *Some things*, Dear Major, *admit no other anſwer than ſilence!!* I fled—this blew me up over four counties (I noted them afterwards) into the wealds of S—— whence I date this. You mentioned not your wound, I am anxious to hear from you, being

Yours, &c."

Henry,

Henry, (ſaid the Major) my brother heard ſhortly afterwards that this unfortunate lady had loſt her ſweetheart by a ſhot from an highwayman at Shooter's-Hill, a year and a half ago, and was, though harmleſs, all but inſane! ſhe was a ſort of "learned lady" and had probably read ſome looſe ſcraps on Tranſmigration, and fancied that her lover had been changed into a dog.—Poor lady! how much did it relieve my mind to know, for the credit of the *tender* ſex, this truth of the caſe ſolemly authenticated.

Come, Henry, I muſt pauſe a moment. Let me parade up and down to the gate, ſtretch my legs, (my ſtumps I mean) and then I will take my reins and drive as briſkly over the turf as I can, for the half-hour dinner bell has juſt rung. Now then, thus continues my travelling brother. But hold! your lungs

lungs will befriend me indeed here; this is a volume almoſt of itſelf!—ſhall we divide, or defer it? I long to get to the character, Dear Major, I am ready primed, (ſaid Henry) you know too, I am a demi-Stentor. You muſt now let *me* be Major, the parol is "Silence."—Henry read.

Henry (ſaid the Major) you ſhall read this letter, or rather "hiſtorical olio" of my poor brother's. You can now decypher his hand a little, and this is written plainer than the reſt, than moſt of the others; he was nearly ſpoilt for a traveller—but it is ſo long I have no time to make comments—begin—begin.

LETTER V.

"Dear Major,

'SINCE I wrote my laſt, I have run through the whole catalogue of perils

perils in one—but you ſhall hear. I had often wiſhed to ſee the delightful village of M——y, within a mile and a half of an arm of the ſea, where I intended to paſs a month or two, unemployed, incog. uncharactered; but with the eye of mind ſtill awake to the impreſſion of any objects, and my pen ready for the inſertion of any ſuch anecdotes and caſualties as might amuſe you. The village I allude to is in itſelf like an Eden—but the wretched tract of heath which you muſt paſs over to it, comfortleſs, uncultivated, preſenting an unvaried picture of deſolation and deſpair! The diſtance acroſs, fifteen miles, with but one little apology for a pot-alehouſe, and not far off from it a ſmall mound of earth in appearance, with a deep well almoſt hidden from view *near* it. Under the mound of earth they ſay the "giant of the foreſt" was buried, having drunken the well dry to

the

the bottom. This is the ruſtic account of it at leaſt—but all traces are loſt, no papers, or report of any thing like teſtimonials appear to encourage conjecture, ſtill leſs to warrant any thing like aſſertion.—Even Dr. Stukely would be at a loſs. Over this heath then, Major, I was travelling, and loſt in thought, truſting to Providence and my Roſinante, when I was very ſuddenly taken ill with a giddineſs in my head, and a ſhivering o'er my limbs.—I retained ſenſe, however, to hold my nag's mane, and pull out an orange, and a ſmall bottle which I never go without—I ate half the one, and drank about two glaſſes of the other—I became worſe, but had the precaution to ſlide down on my ſide, and then fetter with my bridle the hind leg of my one-eyed fellow-traveller, and turned now to advantage a trick he had been taught a century or two ago, of laying down on your ſtriking his knee and making uſe of certain ſounds.

'Twas well I did, for in a few minutes I was loſt! A ſhower of rain fell; and whether it had the effect of any critically applied medicine, I know not, but I at laſt recovered, having lain I cannot tell how long, but I ſhould think above an hour, or perhaps two. I conclude I ſlept. I aroſe, I took out my bottle, finiſhed my orange, and became almoſt as ſuddenly well as I had been taken ill, excepting that a ſharp pain remained in the ſide on which I declined from my nag. I began to ruminate; it was high time to act, however! I confeſs myſelf to have been a coward in the extreme, even childiſh. I appealed to my horſe "what to do," at laſt finding that to return was impracticable, I was reſolved to go on—but whither? Alas! ſhould I fall ill again? ſhould I ſtop then? that would be (ſouſed as I was with rain, and ſtill in an unnatural ſort of perſpiration) madneſs! I mounted once more, walked my nag—I was fearful for

for my head. I ventured, however, in about half an hour to trot. The motion, to my joy ineffable, agreed with me, except that it a little increaſed the pain in my ſide. Should I live, ſaid I, to-morrow I will loſe blood. My horſe ſtumbled—I was alarmed—every nerve ſhook. I looked up to heaven—then o'er the health, where I could ſee nothing—I fancied, however, I ſaw ſomething, but I knew not what. Nothing as it was, I was determined to make my way to it, but darkneſs, alas! hid it from my view. Having ridden ſomewhat briſkly, and obſerved to myſelf that the nearer I approached, it retired to a further diſtance; doubly bewildered, terrified, overtaken indeed, what could I do? I ſtill rode on in the dark, feeling out my path, or what I thought a path. It grew very black and late—Heavens! what were my ſenſations! May my bittereſt enemy never experience them! The moſt tender, affec-

tionate thoughts of "home," of you (my dear Major) of my ſon, ſeized my trembling heart, and unmanned me! But dilatory reflection was vain; it was time to act. I jogged on, the picture of reſignation to the will of Heaven, out of very deſpair of its aſſiſtance. I uttered a prayer, "Gracious Diſpoſer of all things, let there be light!" but the darkneſs was impenetrable. I moved inſenſibly on, in a ſort of reverie, when on a ſudden I was almoſt ſtunned with aſtoniſhment, and half petrified by fear, at a terrible exclamation, "D—n your eyes, I have found you at laſt, have I? and here, too; ſtop, or not ſtop, I will finiſh you—d—n your money—your life is what I want—"Peach" will you?" A piſtol was inſtantly diſcharged; it appeared to hang fire: thank Heaven! it miſſed me—my horſe fell, I fell with him, and ſo ſprained three fingers of my left hand (I fear, my dear Major, I ſhall have often reaſon to complain

complain of pain in them, if I may forebode from my preſent weakneſs) that I was near fainting with agony. My enemy, with due policy, had kept the ſofter turf, ſo that his appeal was inſtant. Suppoſing I was dead, down at leaſt for ſome time, he produced in an inſtant a ſmall dark lanthorn (which I ſince underſtood is called by Diana's Foreſters a light to lighten the genteels) and held it cloſe to my face, when he exclaimed, D—n my eyes, it is not, no it is not Dick Bowman—but all is the ſame for that, ſo ſtrip, my tight-one, or you are a dead man! come, come, d—n me, none of your fun, off with your boots; if you hide a ſixpenny-piece (he then gave me a violent kick, as I laid, *ſur mon derriere*) I'll Dick Bowman you. I begged for mercy—I ſtripped almoſt bare. He ſaid my great coat would ſuit him, he would borrow it! He found three

pounds in ſilver about me; luckily did not examine my ſaddle, in which I had ſewed up thirty-five guineas and a ſmall draught—he looked, however, at my horſe, which did not move, but lay down very peaceably near his maſter! Poor Roſinante! thy bare ribs pleaded more ſtrongly in thy favor, than thy maſter's aſſumed poverty did in the Chriſtian world!—At laſt he darkened his lanthorn; Well, d—n your eyes, good night to you, however; 'tis well you are not Dick Bowman! Come on, young Daiſy. Saying this, he with imprecations at having miſſed his game, dug his ſpurs into his horſe's ſides, and gallopped off full ſpeed. I was fixed ſome minutes, my faculties were benumbed, I could not find my boot! but though it would be of no uſe waiting, unleſs I waited 'till day break, and I could not foreſee any advantage I ſhould gain by it, I however kept in motion,

motion, with my heart and pockets equally light. Had the day flushed on me, what a figure should I have presented: but oh! how long had I to wait for the blessed vivifying light of the sun!—'Tis well 'tis no worse, (said I) my little bottle shall be my sun!—I drank it—it cheered me up; fear had dissipated the pain from my side, and I began to be (strange to say) in good spirits!—How do lesser evils, though in themselves considerable, vanish before the greater! how, sometimes, do misfortunes themselves give a relish to life, and the things of this life, which an insipid uniformity of regular self gratifications, and an unmolested rotation of pleasure denies to the votary of indolence, and victim to lethargy!—You will hardly believe me, Major, but I had not ridden two miles before I began to sing "*Cantabam vacuus coram latrone viator,*" like children in the

dark, you will ſay, through fear. Perhaps in part it might have been ſo.—How wretched is that man's ſituation who dares not move, who dreads to ſtand ſtill, who ſhould not move, yet muſt not ſtand ſtill! I rode on then, ſecretly flattering myſelf with the fond, trembling, anxious wiſh, that I was advancing, though ſlowly, ſomething nearer to that mound of earth, decayed trees, or heap of ruins, or that ſomething which two or three hours paſt, ere darkneſs hid it from my view, I hoped I had detected! Here let me ſay, Major, what I forgot before, that, had I been armed with your old gold-hilted ſword which you found among the rubbiſh after the memorable ſiege of D—, notwithſtanding my weakneſs, I do think I ſhould any where but in a foreſt, have tried its friendſhip, while my enemy was glancing at his ſilver booty, kneeling on the turf by the artificial light.

" Many a weary hour did I travel, till at laſt, not far off, an exploſion of combuſtibles appeared. I could hear nothing, I could only ſee it—It was not in the heavens—I was not deluded—" Oh! that,"—As I ſpoke it gave an audible noiſe—I thought it was about two miles off; but think ſince it muſt have been five miles—to me, to my impatience it appeared fifty. It evaporated quickly as before—I kept a ſort of road, and carefully moved on. At length (you will almoſt think it a romance) I heard a noiſe, I heard the ſound of an hoof, a flying noiſe, as of one who was unable to manage his horſe, broken out in half ſounds of St-ſt-op—a ſtop—dead man! d—n if you don't! Fool that I was! inſtead of riding on briſkly, I dared not ſtir; (misfortunes come not ſingle) but in the dark, and with my poor Roſinante almoſt tired out, what could I do?—Inextricable difficulty! In about five minutes my enemy returned—Stop!

ſaid he.—I returned, "I had been that night robbed, and extremely ill uſed." Are you armed? ſaid he.—I have no arms, ſaid I, and my pockets are ranſacked.—Then, ſaid he, with a deep ſigh, and a ſort of ſhuddering tone, which I ſhall never forget, I do no murder—fear not! Great God! exclaimed he, what am I about? but let that—Oh! let that ne'er be laid to my charge: I am not driven to that yet—I am—ah my poor—that it ſhould come to this!—Take heed, ſaid he rapidly, look not this way! (for he half ſaw, or thought he ſaw me attempt ſome way or ſome how to mark him) look not this way! for your life, turn your horſe's head, be ſilent; and may you eſcape every harm!—but ah! whither am *I* going?—He ſpoke this in the moſt plaintive voice I ever heard.—Oh my poor—how—d—m—n! Oh, mercy! he then diſappeared in an inſtant.—I

was

was too much affected, and entranced by gratitude, not to fall proſtrate on the earth, and thank my ſupernal Deliverer, for the ſignal mercy I had juſt experienced, and the imminent danger I had ſo providentially eſcaped. I aroſe, compoſed myſelf, and rode on, having tied round my neck a green ſilk handkerchief that my enemy had left behind him, encloſing a double-barrelled piſtol, a few balls and ſix flints! At laſt, thank Heaven! I heard articulate noiſes, and an horſe neigh. As I ſuſpected, I was very near ſomething of an habitation—I reached it—I called out—was anſwered in the moſt charitable tone "Pleaſe to come in, kind Sir." How was I near falling down, and kiſſing the threſhold.— To be ſhort, my dear Major, it was, as I hinted to you, the remnant of ſomething which had formerly been a ſort of an inn, reduced now to an apology for a pot-alehouſe,

with half a ſign hanging out, miſerable in the extreme. Cloſe adjoining it was a building, which had the appearance of a barn; yet, *even here*, (you will ſmile) was there a proclamation of comfort in the words at the bottom of the half-ſign, viz. "Good entertainment for gentlemen and ladies, for man and horſe, neat poſt-chaiſes to any part of the world, the moſt genuine ſpruce beer, and liquors of all ſorts, from the public's humble ſervant, Agag Nibbs." This, I was told, a wag, who loſt his way about eighteen years before on the foreſt, put up in a dark night! it was ſaid, however, the giant of the foreſt fixed it up, aſſiſted by the devil; and no one dared to take it down from that time to this. I entered in and got my ſupper, or rather breakfaſt—a delicious one indeed, of a ſlice of bacon and greens, cheeſe, and ſome potatoe-bread. It was cooked on turf; but hunger made

made it palatable. The old woman the hoſtels diſhed it up for me, on a ſort of earthen platter; her huſband, a very aged man, ſaid a ſort of grace, and by way of being company for me, ſat down with me. They talked much, but ate little—they would not rob me. To my poor Roſinante they gave ſome nice ſoft water, with a dozen turnips; and they pulled down the remnant of an old hog-ſtie for his accommodation. Neceſſity is indeed the mother of invention!—After ſome gin and warm water I went to reſt—they wiſhed me a good night, and hoping I would not diſturb, or be diſturbed by their lodger the ſtranger in the barn—A ſtranger? Yes, kind Sir, he came in but two hours before you, and went to bed inſtantly; he goes to bed very late. Ah and alas! unhappy gentleman! his poor wife and children too—Adieu! ſaid I abruptly, my good old man, and kind

dame,

dame, good night!—I retired, and ſhould not have ſlept for thinking who this ſtranger could be, "a gentleman," and in ſuch a place—My fatigue had, however, ſo ſubdued me, that I ſoon fell into a ſleep, which I ſtood ſo much in need of. My bed was made of ſtraw, and a ſort of fenny ruſhes; but oh! it was ſofter than down! (Pardon me, my dear Major, a few minutes, my beef ſteak is put on table, I ſhall drink my uſual quantity, four glaſſes of wine, after dinner, and as this is a rainy day, employ it in the moſt pleaſing way to myſelf, writing to you.—I now go on with my eventful hiſtory).

"I awoke very late next day. Surely all muſt be a dream, ſaid I—but the pain in my ſide, the ſight of a bruiſe, my empty bottle, and loſs of orange, ſoon brought me to my recollection.—But who can this ſtranger be? a gentleman,

tleman, and in a barn too! with a wife and family! is that a deluſion? I ſtepped down, hailed my old lady and hoſt—they had dined—I breakfaſted, however, on their remnants, put very neatly by in a clean wooden platter, ſome roaſted turnips, and a ſmall piece of dried pork. It was delicious!—I went out and ſupplied my fellow-traveller (who neighed when he ſaw me, as if recovered from the dead) with ſome freſh turnips, and a ſort of fenn graſs which they had with infinite pain contrived to grub up and clean out of ſome marſhy place three quarters of a mile off! Charitable old Samaritans! ye poured oil into my wounds! your mite offered up at the ſhrine of pity ſhall never be forgotten by me—will certainly be remembered elſewhere! But who can this ſtranger be? We cannot tell, ſaid my hoſt, his name! We fear he has been wounded. We often

often ſee him hold his hand to his left ſide; perhaps he may lay it on his heart. We have often ſeen him, very often, on his knees; he is, we think, almoſt always at his prayers! we hear a female voice reading to him conſtantly; but in a language we do not underſtand. Yeſterday about one o'clock we were witneſs to a ſcene (I hope we did no ſin in making a hole through the barn—no air could come in!) that made us ſo ſorry, neither Nelly nor myſelf ſlept a wink for crying. We got up very early, and employed the ſpare time in ſearching out provender for your horſe.—We ſaw the dear gentleman claſp and beat his hands together ſo hard, that it ſeemed to ſhake the whole barn! we then heard a ſigh, that muſt almoſt, I am ſure, have burſten his heart!—he looked down to the earth, Look up to me! ſaid his wife, all trembling and pale. I dare not look

look up towards heaven—I dare not—I muſt not. Then oh! my dear, only lift your eyes up to my face.—That, that is (ſaid he in the moſt piteous tone that ever came from the lips of a dying ſaint) that is looking up to heaven, my angel! yet I will look up once more—I do—I ſee—I ſee you! Oh let me die this inſtant! let us embrace, let us aſcend together!—Why ſhould we wiſh to live? Hold, my Frederick! (exclaimed ſhe) hold! 'tis impious to deſpair, while there (looking directly up to heaven) ſtill reigns the Almighty, the All-merciful. I myſelf wiſh to live; but for whom? for you! That is a ſelfiſh wiſh, perhaps you will ſay? not then for you alone, but for—look, Frederick! look!——ſhe pointed to two lovely children, a boy and a girl, who lay the one aſleep in the arms of the other. She ſpoke rather loud, and awakened little Frederick, who cried out,

out, God bleſs papa! come to ſeep—No, no, Fed. get up dinne! the ſtranger looked at them, at his wife—he looked in a ſmall glaſs at himſelf—he turned away inſtantly, as if with horror; his wife ſeized his hand, ſat down upon the ſtraw-bed, frowned little Fred. into quiet; his father inclined his head towards her boſom; he ſtruggled to recover himſelf—ſhe confined him in her arms; Frederick was unmann'd, he yielded, he ſank down (I am much fatigued, ſaid he) on her breaſt, fetched a deep, diſmal ſigh, made his laſt effort to reſume himſelf—could not—muttered ſome half ſentences, "A man! for ſhame! a man weep!" His pride, his remonſtrance was vain! he deluged her boſom with tears—he ſoon after even ſlept—he ſlept for a time ſoundly—ſhe watched him!

Oh,

" Oh, Sir, ſaid my old hoſteſs (weeping herſelf moſt bitterly, and joined in her ſighs occaſionally by her old man, on whom ſhe leaned) Oh, Sir! had you but ſeen her, as we did, what a picture, what an image, what an angel! We left them at laſt, retreating as ſoftly as poſſible, cloſed up the cavity with wool, never to watch them more, as it was the poor dear gentleman's requeſt—Do not diſturb us—let us alone—we will one day reward you!

" My dear Major, I felt myſelf a coward, I had not ſtrength of mind, I dreaded to viſit this " ſtranger in diſtreſs." But ah! let the wicked man who fears his own ſhadow, let the uncharitable paſs by, *I will not!*—God! I owe thee ſome retribution! Can I forget thy mercy ſo lately experienced? If I do, (at this inſtant I felt a pain in my

my ſide—an aweful and gracious memento) may this never quit me! I reſolved to enter the barn; my heart beat, my hand trembled—I curled my fingers to knock gently at the door—I ſtepped back! Ah! poor Roſinante! thou haſt had no water! It was an excuſe—I gave him water—I returned—Courage! ſaid I, adjuſting my neck-cloth; it was the green one I found in the road.—I pulled it off, returned to lock it up where I had depoſited the piſtols. I returned to the door—I heard a noiſe—my reſolution failed, I gave up the matter.—I reſumed my reſolution—Why dread to do a good action? the ſhame lies in committing a bad one! It ſhall be ſo (pleaſe God!) ſaid I—At the inſtant my hoſt, not having heard the door open, ſtepped up, and whiſpered, Sir, ſaid he, ſuppoſe I make way firſt; I have been admitted ſeveral times on giving three raps—

raps—a ſingle rap would alarm him—I forgot to tell you that. We ſtepped gently back, I left it to my old hoſt to adjuſt in his own way every preliminary. Thank heaven, I did!—He ſoon returned, I was to be admitted in (by the old man's clock) "five minutes paſt the next half hour." The clock ſtruck—I ſtood at the door—my old hoſteſs and her huſband waited, counting every moment — It arrived — I knocked—on a ſecond the door opened; I heard a female voice in the mildeſt tone poſſible, ſay, 'Come in, kind Sirs!' I ſaw nothing—a ragged worm-worn curtain checked me; little Fred. came and drew it away; I took him up in my arms and kiſſed him repeatedly; (I meant by this to give them time to recover themſelves) then with a cheerful countenance and ſocial freedom, "Pardon me, Madam, ſaid I; pardon me, Sir! You will think me very ill-bred,

I fear,

I fear, to—" No, no, ſhake hands with papa, ſaid little Fred. Mr. Great-boots. I could not reſiſt his plea, I offered my hand; Mr. Frederick ſhook it with ſome cordiality, but with much diffidence, and a ſort of dignified politeneſs.—Kiſs mamma's pretty face, ſaid Fred. jumping round and pulling me. Her *hand,* ſaid his father. Give hand, then, to Mr. Great-boots, cried little Fred. She gave her hand to her huſband, he put it into mine—I kiſſed it tremblingly, retired a few paces, and ſat down on a ſeat which had been made of the children's little forms. We have, ſaid he, (ſighing with a ſmile) we have no regular chair here. I prefer, ſaid I, a low ſeat! A pauſe enſued. —I thought it my province to break ſilence, by pleading excuſe for my obtruſive wiſh, and apologizing for what I feared he might think an inſolent curioſity. He was beforehand with me,

and

and riſing (as if to ſtir up the turf which was nearly extinguiſhed, but really to wipe a tear which ſtood trembling in the lovely face of his angel, then reſuming his ſeat) Sir, ſaid he, that this is not a place for court-ceremony, you will eaſily admit—Fred. you may play with your ſiſter at "Feed the pigs, my dame," as good old Agag taught you, 'till I ſend for you. The children retired.—This is not a place for ſuperfluous ceremony, Sir—Let us agree to diſmiſs it. Amen! ſaid I briſkly. I am not much, ſays he, of a phyſiognomiſt; am as little apt to *Lavater* any man into condemnation, as to countenance him into a monopoliſt of every thing noble and virtuous, glorious, irreſiſtible, &c. yet ſomething *internally* convinced me, on your firſt entré, that you was in the moſt ſubſtantial radical ſenſe of it "a man of feeling, and a gentleman!"

Your

Your tout enſemble encouraged me to a frankneſs almoſt unlimited! my own dear wife caught authority from me, and we inſtantly truſted you—What can warrant this? I know not! A ſecret intimation! a myſterious preſcience! I cannot tell—I cannot define it—Yet I feel, if you cannot be my friend, that you, Sir, will never be my enemy! Heaven forbid! ſaid I, that I ſhould offend againſt that ſenſibility, thoſe philanthropic yearnings with which Providence has bleſſed me!—I call it almoſt as great a bleſſing to have been endued with them, as I think it a mercy to have had ſo narrow an eſcape juſt now, very lately, from death! I here took out my handkerchief, coughed, but looked at him acutely—Eſcape from death! Mercy! my dear, ſaid he, with quivering lips, to his wife. I continued, as if I had not noticed him,—I am your friend; but

tell

tell me, Sir, not how, but whom I am thus inclined to befriend? Sir, ſaid he a little diſdainfully, you are extending the liberty I gave you! Pardon me, (ſaid I) I requeſt not your name; you are a man in diſtreſs—that ought to be ſufficient for me. Sir, ſaid he, I will tell you then, who and what I am—I am a huſband, a father, a *diſappointed merchant!* and though not formally denounced, am in fact a "devoted outlaw!" Oh, Sir! ſaid I, retain your two firſt dear titles, many, many years; for ever retain them, at leaſt while you live—As for your diſappointments, you are not exempted from the hopes of common men, nor, I preſume, privileged by a warrant from Heaven from general rebuffs, as you wander through the wilderneſs of this world! I ſpoke this with an humble ſort of ſternneſs—he was ſtruck; but ſaid nothing. The laſt particular, of your being as you

ſay, a "devoted outlaw," excites my curioſity! It ſhall be ſatisfied, ſaid he—The hiſtory of my diſappointment is ſhort indeed, and I am now, even now aſhamed to complain! On the beſt footing, then, I ſet out for the Eaſt Indies, abſenting myſelf from that angel for ten years—She, however, on my ſucceſs there, truſted herſelf to the ſeas, to perils infinite, for my ſake—ſhe followed me abroad at the expiration of three years after I had left her. I received her (bleſſed be God!) ſafe, but much emaciated! ſhe however recovered—we were married. I proſpered, though not indeed to the extent of my ambitious views, and inordinately ſanguine expectations—I left the Indies with a large fortune, Sir, (his eyes ſparkling) got by indefatigable induſtry and laudable efforts! part of it I had ſecured in England, though but, alas! a ſmall part. I followed in two months

with

with what I may indeed call my all—my deareſt wife—We were unfortunate, and reduced to very ſevere extremities—we were ſhipwrecked, but providentially ſaved from death! we were afterwards taken by the enemy—they boarded us, ſtripped our veſſel, threatened to blow us up if any thing were concealed of the minuteſt value.—With my deareſt wife and two children, ſuch a wife, Sir, and ſuch two children as you ſaw juſt now, what could be done? All was given up. We were put into an open boat to gain if poſſible a neutral veſſel then at anchor. The commander, in mercy, took us—we met a fleet of merchantmen at ſea, ſailing for England—we gained dmittance and were indeed pitied; for we experienced moſt brotherly humanities! We reached ſhore at length, near a moſt beautiful village on an arm of the ſea. A gentleman there, after we had hired

ſome private, neat, though ſmall lodgings, called on us—we told him our hiſtory—he offered to let us a cottage (ah! that cottage!) which a tenant had lately quitted—we hired it, but at a rent, larger than we ought to have given, and as it turned out afterwards, could afford. This gentleman we thought moſt kind; however after having paid little attention to us for near a year, at laſt he had detected our character and claims for reſpect; he found out I was a gentleman, and my wife a gentlewoman—he became to us a very ſingular courtier, one who fulfils his promiſes! nay, he exceeded them; he cauſed us clandeſtinely artificial diſtreſſes, that he might buſy himſelf in rectifying them; —did not offer us indeed money in the groſs, but I obſerved would never take our rent, which by authority of ſeveral additional claims he had increaſed to an alarming ſum—I was always

ways ſilenced with "Sir, you envy me the power of obliging!" More than two years elapſed, 'till at laſt I felt a ſuſpicion that (to make my hiſtory ſhorter) all was not as it ſhould be!—Yet I knew not what to ſuſpect. At laſt I dreamed he wanted to rob me of my deareſt, my ineſtimable treaſure! It was but a dream, yet it raiſed an idea which I did not diſcourage! "Forewarned, (ſays the old proverb) forearmed." Neceſſity obliged me rather ſuddenly to attend the Bank.—Through ſome accidental, but important irregularity, my intereſt was moſt terribly reduced. I left my wife; took one piſtol myſelf, and left the other charged, in caſe of accidents, to defend herſelf and children with. It was my uſual depoſit, and injunction—Heaven will point it againſt any houſebreaker, any villain of either ſort, who ſhould attempt to injure my innocent, my

deareſt wife! I prayed with her and for her, as uſual, whenever for two or three days I was obliged to quit her on buſineſs. I bade her, and my little ones, adieu! I returned from London ſooner than I had reaſon to hope—She embraced me myſteriouſly, but with more than common fervor! Is all well? ſaid I, eagerly. Yes, my dear Frederick! *Has* all been well?—Is my dream true? ſaid I, ſternly. She trembled. I charge you by the God whom I adore, tell me inſtantly! She revealed then to me a ſecret which you can anticipate. But the ſerpent was abaſhed, and ſlank like a coward to his hole! he had ſhewn his teeth, but the Divine arm had reſcued her from his ſting! I will diſcharge this piſtol, ſaid I to myſelf, at the head of Satan, ere I ſleep this night. I affected to compoſe myſelf, and appeared unuſually comforted and gay at my wife's eſcape—ſhe retired

to

to reſt before me. I wrote a note immediately to Lord Edmund.

" My Lord,

" Think not to eſcape—To-morrow I will attend early at the edge of your village, at ſix o'clock, and tell you, (well armed) you are a villain—Deny it if you dare—diſprove it if you can!

" I am,

" Frederick, &c.

" I received an anſwer moſt expeditiouſly—

" Sir,

" Lord Edmund's actions are his own. Were they even villainous, he will never ſuffer any man living to call in queſtion the honor of

" Edmund, &c.

" Lord Edmund was (I was told) a man of raſh ſpirit and unreflecting cou-

rage; a desperate predestinarian; a man (so was it told me by an enemy) who would defend a base action from the same principle he could perpetrate one—because it was base! I stole from my bed. My wife, who had watched very late every night, and rested but interruptedly, I left with her little ones in a most profound sleep! I met Lord E——d—we fought—he maimed me on the first shot—I returned it—he looked most terribly sedate, though envenomed with rage. His second ball just touched my left ear. I shot again, and struck him violently on the knee—he fell. I rode off instantly, reached home, and found (blessed miraculous good fortune!) my wife yet a-sleep (for to say truth, I had made use of opium as my friend)—my little girl awake, Fred. also a-sleep; I got into bed and gently disturbed his mother.—By degrees I related every thing! we fled away;

away; we paſſed one night in a deep valley to prevent diſcovery—a valley where ſure no animated being ever dwelt an inſtant; but the everlaſting Guardian above protected us! The ſide hill was a ſhelter to us—We did not ſleep, but we dozed, as if by turns—We huddled ourſelves together like pigs, and abſolutely kept each other warm! At a time when univerſal ſilence reigned, we wandered on unknowing whither to ſtray, but truſting to Providence our guide. The moon appeared—We found no track till many a weary hour had paſſed. We diſcovered at laſt a ſort of place where imagination had figured to our hope, there might have been a veſtige! We were, alas! diſappointed. Our fear at one time impeded, at another gave wings to our flight. I thought I ſaw a houſe! Yes, I will on, merciful Providence! I will yet truſt in thee! Again I was

diſappointed! At laſt—yes, yes I will truſt the morning ſtar! that light was not given in vain! Come on, my faithful wife!—the greater our diſtreſs, the more animated ſhall be our hope and exertion!—We will proceed. I determined to walk ſtrait on; and ſtrait on did we hobble, content to make our bed as it were in the duſt, and thankfully accept the canopy of heaven for our curtain. I walked and croſſed ſuddenly a ſtrip of ground which appeared as if once on a time it might have been trodden by ſheep—It *was* a ſheep walk. Thanks for this; profound thanks, gracious Heaven!—I kept on a line of the depreſſed heath—I loſt it, alas!—I recovered it—I loſt it again! how did my heart palpitate! You would have thought I had been ſcrutinizing every thread of heath, for a loſt diamond, when I abruptly ſtumbled againſt ſomething uneven! It was

a rut—

a rut—It was a road—a road—a road—a road! Here let us pauſe! (ſaid I). We reſted, we refreſhed ourſelves with ſome ſmall remains of yeſternight's provender; but we had no drink—yet we were not very thirſty! We aroſe, we knelt again, we looked upwards, we put forth a prayer—it was heard. We followed the road, which appeared to be direct—we took breath—I ſtretched my eyes eagerly to the horizon—ſomething intercepted my view—It was a pillar of ſmoke, which appeared to croſs the whiteſt cloud I ever ſaw! I felt ſomething which intimated "Humanity!" I perſevered, Sir, and detected this houſe, barn, habitation, call it what you will—to me it has been a palace! Here I reſt in peace, till better times—our ſtock is almoſt out. You ſee this roof—you ſee my wife here, you ſee there my children, not in want of ſubſiſtence, but in fear

of it only—but I will provide for them as "*well*" as I can! No doubt, ſaid I with *particular* energy, you will do nothing *ill*, nothing unlike a gentleman; but truſt to the ſame Providence for bread this day, who ſupplied you with it laſt night, and directed you to— To what? Sir! (ſaid he alarmed) to whom? why? when? where? Sir!—Pardon me, awhile, fair lady, (ſaid I abruptly) let me not forget my one-eyed fellow-traveller; a little more water, and a few more turnips. I quitted the room—The children, who had been ſent out, came near; I uſhered them in, kiſſing little Fred. I looked obliquely *at that inſtant* under my hat, and ſaw their father the picture of ſuſpicious-fear, and their mother of ſilent inexpreſſible deſpair! What muſt have been their feelings! I went out. My ſuſpicions I think are true, (ſaid I to myſelf) then I will put them to the teſt. I reflected,

and

and reſolved. I returned—I entered the room. The children had been ſent quickly out again with their mother, and my hoſteſs, to gather a few plants which they called water-creſſes. I entered the room; he was alone—Thank Heaven for that! ſaid I. It gave me courage—yet my ſenſibility bled to inſult, to probe a broken heart. I entered the room. He ſaid very faintly "Come in, Sir!"—He ſaw me not—he looked towards the window! Sir, ſaid I, I fear I am unwelcome—Oh, Sir, no!—Look at me then! ſaid I, ſternly. He looked round. At that inſtant I ſtruck the table with one hand on which I had placed the piſtols; the flints and balls I ſhook out of the bag with the other—(to my ears they *thundered* on the ground) at the ſame time I pulled aſide the collar of my coat, and obtruded the green neckcloth on his view—I

then

then looked at him ſteadily, expanding my hands, as if to ſay, There, Sir!!!

"My dear Major, he was almoſt petrified! he ſtaggered, he fell on the bed—he ſtarted up, he daſhed himſelf down on the floor, deſperately. He claſped my knees—he looked up in my face moſt pitiouſly.—No more, Sir, no more, (ſaid I) it is enough—I forgive you—You may, Sir! cried he; but I will not be forgiven—I never will forgive myſelf! ſtand off, beware of an highwayman! The piſtols! oh for mercy! the piſtols!—Here, in the extreme paroxyſm of rage and deſperation, he furiouſly flung himſelf (ſpringing up from the ground) on the table where the piſtols lay—I ſeized his hand—he ſeized, in return, my neckcloth—but his hand became feeble in an inſtant. He gave a diſmal long-extended groan, and ſank on the floor as if inanimate! He by de-

grees

grees recovered—I placed him on the bed—I ſat by him. Endeavour to compoſe yourſelf, Sir, ſaid I, immediately; your wife muſt not ſee you thus.—Here he wept; his agony came from the ſoul! It was my *firſt* attempt! (ſaid he faintly) can you, moſt injured Sir, forgive my firſt attempt! my very firſt act of deſpair! Be comforted, ſaid I, but be ſilent; or I quit you for ever. He was calm—he was himſelf again. Hear me then, Mr. Frederick; but hear me, ſaid I—From my heart I forgive thee, even (pronouncing it very ſlowly) as I hope to be forgiven; and if my prayers may be heard, and your contrition prove ſincere, we will both humbly importune, and ſhall obtain mercy from HIM who deſpiſeth not ſuch as be ſorrowful! Quit then the ſubject for ever—I ſhall think you dread me as your betrayer if—I will, I will truſt you, exclaimed he, my generous friend!

I will

I will obey you, as I dread your diſpleaſure, and hope to merit the forgiveneſs of heaven! It was enough—I conquered, I pardoned, I reclaimed!—My triumph was complete!

"At that inſtant I ſaw his wife walking towards the barn ſlowly: the old hoſteſs hobbled on in pain, and ſhe would not quit her abruptly. Come, Sir, my dear friend, (ſaid I) we have little, we have no time to loſe—cheer up—I muſt unharneſs. I ſtepped aſide, and drew in my ſaddle by the girths, which I had poſted near the door. I fear you are a bungler at beſt; you will never be a good man at the trade; ſee, ſee what you have overlooked; unrip the pummel. He attempted to do it. I was too impatient to wait; I ſeized the knife, and unripping drew out 30*l.* in caſh, with a draft. There is a bribe for you, ſaid I, preſenting it to him,

him, to keep a ſecret—you muſt not truſt it to a woman! He looked at it, fell back, fell on my neck, and burſt into tears—I checked him; Come, come, enough; be now a man! He reſumed himſelf. Adieu! ſaid I, for half an hour; I need a walk; I will be back ſoon, my dear Sir, preſſing his hand eagerly; in time, in very good time—adieu! The mercy you ſhewed to me, I have returned, endeavour to —Oh! yes I know you will deſerve it —But ſee, your wife is at the gate! Saying this, I left him abruptly, and eſcaped out the back way, without her ſeeing me.—Judge, Major, of Frederick's ſenſations!—but who would not envy me a walk enlivened with ſuch reflexions as mine muſt have been!

Here Henry coughed—coughed again—Shall I read? ſaid the Major eagerly—No, no, dear Sir, not a word, ſaid

ſaid Henry — Oh! do not interrupt me!

"But I ſaw her—the walk had given her a roſy tint; and if any thing could be ſuperlatively beautiful, moſt intereſting indeed, it was Mrs. F—— leading by the hand a little cherub, her daughter! I never ſaw ſo ſtrong a reſemblance of a mother!—Fred. was more like his father. She was herſelf the picture of ruſtic neatneſs, but there was elegance in her manner that ſpoke "ſuperior times." In they walked—ſhut the door—I began my excurſion—returned at the time propoſed. My heart beat the alarm on knocking at the door; for their ſakes, however, I affected eaſe, as if nothing had happened—What did I not feel! Though an act of peculiar, refined generoſity, and ſubſtantial humanity, darts a ray of fervent gladneſs on the heart, and bleſſes

bleſſes, exquiſitely bleſſes him that giveth, even as much perhaps as it adminiſtereth comfort to him that receiveth; yet there is a pain, though it be delicious, though it ſpring from conſcious merit and kindneſs, ſtill there is an inexpreſſible pain, an uneaſy trembling ſenſation then when we meet, when we call upon thoſe whom we have eminently benefited, or even politely obliged—at leaſt ſo it was with me! What expreſſions of gratitude had I to *ſuffer*, what penalty to undergo of hearing a woman, a lovely wife, ſtruggling by every action, (even by kneeling perhaps) calling in every idiom, varying every phraſe, yet unable to expreſs as much as ſhe wiſhed, or half what ſhe felt! Alas! ſaid I to myſelf, ſuch a ſcene have, I to undergo; yet it muſt, it ought to be borne! it is a preſumptuous pride to forego it: there is a ſupercilious meanneſs, a

ſort

ſort of radical cruelty in not gratefully accepting what is gratefully offered; and reſpectfully marking the effuſions of a full heart. I knocked—I entered. Ah! my preſentiment! It was true. The huſband was firm and manly, I had bound him to ſilence—He was about to preſent his wife to me—She waited not; but leading her children in her hands, ſhe inſtantaneouſly quitted them, fell down on her knees, claſped her hands, looked up to heaven—Yet ſhe did not weep! I was glad of it. She then looked ſtedfaſtly on me; I could not bear the ſight of her eyes ſwoln as they were! Nay, Sir, turn not away, ſaid ſhe, I have promiſed my huſband, and I promiſe you, I will not weep; then burſt forth into a ſhower indeed of tears, ſprang up, fell on my neck, and kiſſed my cheek. She would have fallen, had I not, with ſome difficulty, ſupported her

her—" Oh Sir!"—I beckoned her huſband to diſengage her; ſo indeed he did, but it was too much almoſt for him. I found at laſt I was the firmeſt among them; I therefore ſpoke ſomewhat ſternly, No more of this, it is enough; remember you have both promiſed to obey me! They aſſented—I took little Fred. and his ſiſter in my arms; he laughed, " Mr. Great-boots again, mamma!" — She ſmiled, took him to her boſom—the little cherub I gave to her father—Adieu! then, ſaid I, for half an hour, we will dine together. I retired to viſit my poor nag—I returned—we dined together—It was a luxurious feaſt! I reſumed the diſcourſe (advancing a nod of ſilence) and gave an outline of the plan which, with their approbation, I was enabled to execute. I ſaluted his wife, ſhook him moſt cordially, moſt affectionately by the hand!

The

"The object, dear Madam, of my preſent excurſion, was to viſit and paſs a ſhort time at that beautiful, that very village where you ſay Lord E—d lives—When there I will not be idle; I will inveſtigate matters, will collect the general report; will probe for particular information; and if it be poſſible, and you will truſt me as a negotiator, (ſince you are ſo good as to believe me your friend) I hope all will ſtill be well. No legal outlawry has been denounced againſt you. May I beg the amount of your debts of all ſorts? Sir, ſaid he, we lived privately, we were always cautious; the groſs village-demand againſt us is but ſmall in itſelf, though to us, in our preſent ſituation, inſurmountable—not more than 20*l.*—But ah! Sir, continued he, the enormous rent of our houſe, magnified, alas! *inſidiouſly*, I am ſure unneceſſarily, againſt us, (if detected we muſt

muſt pay up to the end of this quarter, two months hence) amounts to ſuch a debt as I am aſhamed, I cannot, I dare not, I muſt beg to be excuſed making the diſcloſure of! I looked at him ſomewhat ſternly—Sir, (ſaid I) I came not to expreſs my wiſh alone to ſerve you, but to prove that I can—*I will ſerve you!* Fear not; tell me the ſum. He bowed—70*l.* then! His wife ſighed! Ah! how cheaply (ſaid I) could I purchaſe your ſecurity, your freedom for that—but, dear Madam, is it no more? Sir, laying her hand on her breaſt, it is not quite ſo much —Then Little Fred. ſaid I, Mr. Great-boots will be off—Take care of my little wife, your ſiſter—Adieu! I ſaid to them all, and abruptly left them.

" My poor Roſinante had loſt his ſhoe—'twas no matter—the heath is ſoft, and heaven knows when I ſhall tread

tread a road! Yet the ſame Providence that guided me hither, will ſtill, I fear not, ſtill direct me! Alas! (my dear Major) I loſt my way again—I ſlept on the heath: late the next day, however, I arrived ſafe at the delightful village. I was very tired, drank tea, and went to bed immediately. I ſlept ſoundly, but roſe early, breakfaſted, ſet out on foot, reconnoitered the village, viſited the environs of Lord E——d's houſe; it overtopped the village, but was moſt romantically ſituated on the ſide of an hill, fantaſtically, but beautifully planted with the choiceſt trees. Oh! that the poſſeſſor of that houſe, ſhould poſſeſs ſo bad an heart!—I deſcended, found out the cottage once tenanted by my new friends, the ſtrangers at Nibbs's—The windows were ſhut, the caſements dirty—there was an air of ſudden deſolation, as if all the ſhrubs and flowers had withered, when no longer

longer tended by the hand of their lovely botaniſt and patroneſs! I ſighed deeply, returned to my inn hungry and tired, but with my plan full in view, and my wits ſharpened towards the execution of my project. I got my dinner, drank the health of my dear clients, not forgetting Little Fred. and his ſiſter. I then ſummoned to a bottle my hoſt, a comely, fat, unſuſpecting, good-tempered fellow. It was (he ſaid) an idle day with him, and he was deadly fond of the company of gentlemen—he *inſpired* to that honor as often as he could—My good Lord E——d, (good! ſaid I ſecretly) yes, Lord E——d twice a year drinks a bottle at my houſe, and ſays he loves of all things to talk with me, and my wife, for ſhe alſo *inſpires* to the honor of good company. Let us drink to his health! Ah, Sir, with all my heart. Good Lord E——d's health! (the epi-

thet *repeated?* ſaid I) poor gentleman! his goodneſs has nearly been ſtopped *for ever!*—To be ſure he does love game a bit—no wonder—he is a bachelor; but he never ſhoots (ſaid he archly) in other people's coverts. Now I talk about ſhooting—did you never hear of the late duel?—Pray, ſaid I eagerly, inform me; but puſh about the bottle. He reſumed, I know it all, Sir—all the truth; and may my bad debts never be ſcored off, if I do not, *upon my honor*, tell the truth! He was the innocent cauſe of the ruin, and ſuppoſed ſelf-murder (for we loſt him ſuddenly and for ever) of the beſt man in the world; married to ſuch a lady too! Oh, Sir, it is a long melancholy ſtory; but I muſt make ſhort of it, as I have (which I had forgotten juſt now to mention) to attend a meeting of my ſon's creditors. Lord E——d, then, Sir, (mind ye) the good Lord

E——d

E——d was told, by a proud artful woman, a kept miſtreſs of the late member for L——e (whom poor Mr. F——'s wife had accidentally, though unintentionally, offended) that poor Mrs. Frederick herſelf was a kept woman alſo, and might eaſily be had, as her keeper was tired of her, and was about to turn her off, if any body would have her. Lord E——d (we have underſtood ſince) was ſo fond, in his heart, of this lovely woman, that he would almoſt have been kind enough to have married her, though ſhe was for certain to be an outcaſt. He was too early in making his propoſals; he ſhould, to be ſure, have waited;—that was his fault, and all the fault that I can ſee.—But to go on, Sir!—When Mr. F—— was laſt out, mind ye, Sir, he called on her; ſhe was coy, and reſiſted—he, Lord E——d, (who knew the bad part of womankind well)

thought it all pretence—all an affected coldneſs—he wiſhed, Sir, in ſhort, to foreſtall the market!—Mr. F—— (ſince proved her wedded huſband) reſented this inſult to his honored wife—called Lord E——d to account. They fought deſperately: Lord E—d was terribly wounded; once we thought we ſhould have loſt him!—Oh, Sir, that d—'d wicked woman, Mrs. Stukely, was the cauſe of it all!—Poor Lord E——d has often been delirious; our ſurgeon has told me ſuch tales, moſt melancholy tales, that poor Lord E—d uſed to call out "Frederick! I have wronged thy wife, and murdered thee! Your children too, I have murdered them all! Oh waſh, waſh my blood-ſtained hands, waſh them, angels! or blaſt me ye powers of heaven from the ſight of man! kill, oh kill me! why do I live!"—Sir, I cannot go on—(here he ſighed piteouſly, and drank a bumper,

bumper, bolting it) it is too, too diſmal!—Poor Mrs. F——! poor lady! it is too late to recover them. Poor Lord E——d! is he well yet (interrupted I) of his wounds?—Oh, Sir, yes, (added my landlord) but his head, his mind, his ſpirits—nothing can ever do him good, but to know poor Mr. F—— was alive—his wife alive, and all.—Ah! dear Sir, I believe he would die to ſave them; but it is impoſſible, alas! quite impoſſible! God Almighty himſelf, I think, could not reſtore him, cannot ſave him!—Hold, my landlord, deſpair not ſo faſt! How did he die? By his own hand, Sir; and his wife and children died through grief too. Landlord, ſaid I, riſing, looking at him ſtedfaſtly, and ſternly, preſſing (ſhaking it a little) his arm, Can you keep one ſecret? I never yet broke my word, Sir! and if I do now, (replied he) it is the firſt

time! *He is alive* then! ſaid I; Frederick lives—his wife lives—his children live! Praiſed be the Lord then! ſhouted the landlord, huzza!—amen!—tolderol—Can't ſtay; can't ſtay, Sir! Wife, attend the gentleman—I am off, can't ſtay half an inſtant! Helter, ſkelter! ſaid I, to the devil.—I called him back, but it was in vain. My landlady ſtepped in—I nodded, "I need not trouble you." My head ached, I wiſhed to be quiet an hour or two. She ſhut the door—I was alone—I looked in the very middle of the fire, and muſed—when ſuddenly the bells rang merrily—what then?—in a few minutes, at leaſt before I attempted to give myſelf, or even think of an anſwer, in bolted my good landlord out of breath, coughing, half laughing, and almoſt beſide himſelf. He could only ſay, Sir, you are wanted—Lord Edmund, Sir, deſires— At

that

that moment a ſervant rapped, and, moſt reſpectfully bowing, preſented me a note, not ſealed up, and the ink hardly dry:

"Lord Edmund Rawleigh preſents compliments to the gentleman who dined with the landlord of the Vine at one o'clock this day, and requeſts the honor of his immediate attendance at the Villa, on a queſtion of the moſt extreme importance! &c."

"I followed, immediately, the ſervant; enquired how Lord Edmund did, ſummoned up my reſolution, arrived at the houſe; the butler met me—My maſter, Sir, will have the happineſs to receive you in a few minutes—I was uſhered into an elegant drawing-room. What were my doubts! what my fears! what my ſenſations! Lord E——d appeared, advancing towards

me in the moſt graceful attitude, with the moſt dignified, but eaſy formality —preſented his hand, which trembled exceedingly — attempted to ſpeak — could not. At laſt, Sir (ſaid he) I am a man in pain!—will your goodneſs think any further ceremony ſuperfluous? Oh yes, my Lord, ſaid I, our impatience is mutual. Is it true then, ſaid he—Gracious God! is it true—can it be true?—My Lord, it is, it is! —Then I too ſhall live again! (ſaid he) —But is it—is it true?—reſumed he. I anſwered ſlowly—It is! Merciful heaven! He ſank down on a ſopha, and his paroxyſm was extreme! I rang, as if for myſelf, for wine and water—he drank. My Lord, be compoſed! be attentive! I am, (ſaid he) adjuſting his cravat, and ſmoothing his hair. He drew me a chair near the fire—locked the door—we ſat near the table—he fetched a moſt deep ſigh, even

from

from the bottom of his ſoul! Pardon me, Sir; I am now all attention and ſilence! My Lord, then ſaid I, Frederick is ſafe, is alive!—his wife alive, and his children well—they are all under my protection—I have heard minutely, his and your hiſtory, my Lord! —I have heard too of the infamous Jezebel! (Ah! Sir, cried he, ſhe ſeduced me into the confines of hell) My Lord, I will ſpare you the torment of advancing, what we both too well know! I come to bring you comfort, not to tear open, wantonly, your wound, but to heal it—I come, armed with authority, to forgive an error, which had nearly been fatal to all parties! Oh! my Lord, from what a precipice have you retreated! Had your lordſhip fallen, what account could you have yielded up at the higheſt impartial throne? Had poor Frederick periſhed, what would the inno-

cent, the lovely angel, his wife, have felt, or whither would she have flown? —No whither, my Lord! — she would have been *carried* to a — madhouse!! What would their fatherless children have done?—they would have lisped out their famine and helplessness to a callous world unheeded, and perhaps perished on a barren heath! Mercy! Mercy on me thou supernal messenger! (said Lord E——d) spare me, Sir, my poor brain will split—my distraction will return—I know, I know it all—Will there never be? there never can be, an end to my misery! Yes, my Lord, said I, the end *is* come. It depends on yourself now to make all well—a blissful prospect opens to my view, the sun of comfort has risen on us all, and I trust our future happiness will be so extended, so perfect, so exalted, so—+ but my Lord E——d, you must be steady—you must resume yourself.

ſelf.—Are your eyes yet ſtrong enough to look againſt the light of the ſun? can you bear ſo much happineſs at once? Sir, I am compoſed—the cloud has paſſed—I ſee clearly!—but, Oh! Sir, I have not yet bent the knee! Will you have patience?—He waited not my anſwer—he left me—I heard his ſtudy door ſhut quickly.

"I was now alone; I needed a ſmall reſpite. Poor Lord Edmund! what miſeries haſt thou not ſuffered! Happy Lord E——d! how wilt thou ſupport the joy which awaits thee! how wilt thou receive Frederick, whom thy enſanguined arm had nearly blaſted from the earth! the excellent, the generous, the brave Frederick!! how wilt thou proſtrate thyſelf before that angel of innocence whom thou haſt blaſphemed!! how wilt thou kiſs the duſt under her feet!! how wilt thou not claſp their

lovely olive-branches, and wind them round thy heart for ever!! May Heaven aſſiſt thee in thy expiations!—may that ſame—

"Here Lord Edmund returned—Sir, ſaid he, I am a man—I am whole again—I am regenerated!—But, Oh! tell me where are they? in what part of the world?—Are they returned—(Heaven forbid!) to the Indies? Are they—My Lord, (interrupted I) they are in this part of the world—but how to find them directly I know not—they are ſomewhere in ſome part of a foreſt—You mean (ſaid he) the "Arabian deſert," ſo it is called—but where? in what part? Is the canopy of heaven their only covering? the dreary damp heath their bed?—My Lord! they live in a ſort of a barn, adjoining ſomething like an alehouſe, ſomething of the cottage kind—Mercy on us! (ſaid he) is there

there a well any where near it?—I have been told ſo, my Lord; I think I ſaw the appearance of one. It is, replied Lord E——d, then the "Giant's of the foreſt," whom I have read of—Oh conduct, conduct us to them!—Alas! my Lord, (ſaid I) ſo wild, ſo ſavage, ſo infinitely perplexed is this heath, that we never can find it—I indeed have lived to croſs it, but I fear we ſhall not eaſily find it again! Fear not! (ſaid Lord E——d) Apropos! I will ſend for old Noah, my aged ſhepherd's father; he may remember, poſſibly, its latitude, &c. By this venerable old man, if his recollection be clear, aſſiſted by Providence, we ſhall find them out. My Lord, ſaid I, I will get every poſſible information from Noah; but I cannot ſuffer you to attend me now! much is yet to be done—we muſt not be too ſudden—beſides, I have not yet collected Frederick's debts. Oh, Sir,

(ſaid

(ſaid he) I have long ſince preſumed to pay them—Mr. Frederick cannot, does not owe here a ſhilling! Alas, how much am I his debtor!—Thus then, my Lord, ſaid I, having pauſed five minutes, thus then it ſhall be—On the third morning I wiſh you to travel onwards, under old Noah's direction, over the heath, in a poſt-chaiſe, until twelve o'clock. (My coach ſhall be ready, ſaid Lord Edmund). Then halt, and wave a flag as high in the air as you can. Our eyes will we ſtretch to the utmoſt horizon, and we ſhall ſurely detect you! Should any unforeſeen neceſſity detain yourſelf, my Lord, ſend three of your ſervants armed, and let them wait two or three hours for us. Oh! we ſhall all meet ſafe again, all jointly bleſs our heavenly Protector, all be unitedly happy once more—in (ſhall it be ſo?) Lord E——d's houſe! Yes, yes, ſaid he; but,

but, Oh! delay not—haſten, haſten, and may Heaven ſpeed you! I, my dear Major, abſolutely *ran* to the Vine, ſaddled my Roſinante, and telling my landlord I would be ſoon back again, ordered him to put the ringers into my bill. No, no, Sir, ſaid the landlord, I have paid them in good Engliſh fare myſelf! You did ſet the peal, then? (ſaid I) Oh, how well a *man* can keep a ſecret!—Sir, anſwered my landlord, I could not for joy keep it! Sir, it would have burſt me! Well, well, ſaid I, I forgive you! Adieu for the preſent! Saying this, I clapped ſpurs, &c. &c.

"The air on the heath refreſhed me much; for whether the agitation of my mind had deranged me or not, I cannot aſſert, but I often thought that the air near the ſea did not agree with my conſtitution: there was ſomething certainly

tainly in it which offended me! I retraced, as well as I could, my pathway, and (to have a little mercy, dear Major, on your patience!) arrived ſafe at length at my wiſhed-for deſtination, having travelled all night, which happened to be a mild and fine one, very early at Nibbs's in the morning. Ah! my friends! may your ſleep be ſweet! I will not interrupt it! The old hoſt was up. I nodded ſilence, and crept into bed, where I ſlept very ſoundly till one o'clock. Frederick and his wife, I heard, ſtole a peep at me. I was at laſt awakened by my venerable hoſteſs. Oh, Sir! I cannot manage them—you muſt get up—they are too impatient to wait any longer for their breakfaſt! Why, what's a clock? Paſt one, Sir! Have they not breakfaſted, then? No, Sir! they would not touch a bit till you joined them! I aroſe quickly. How did we not embrace

each

each other! We breakfaſted together. Was ever man conſummately bleſſed? Yes, yes, I was!—but cannot deſcribe what you can faintly form an idea of—the animated effuſion of acknowlegement on one ſide, and hearty congratulation on the other! At laſt, I reſumed the man of buſineſs—they were all attentive.—I related every particular, and arranged our plan for the next day. Mr. Frederick maſtered his countenance—but how often did his lovely, ineſtimable treaſure, how often did ſhe affect to ſmile! yet how often rebuke that ſmile with a tear! But when I touched the point where lord Edmund was wreſted by the arm of a devil from the path of honor, bewildered through the ſeduction of a "Jezebel" into a thought, into a mental execution of an act which his liberal nature would have diſdained, his manly ſuperior ſenſibilty would have revolted at—when I related

with

with coolneſs as a ſerious and ſolemn truth, what lord Edmund had ſuffered, his intreaties to ſee them once more, to make every humble, every poſſible reparation for the infinite (and as he uſed to call it, inexpiable) injury which he had perpetrated againſt Frederick—that the ſevereſt wound he ſuffered was that which he had inflicted on him—the earneſt prayer he had tranſmitted through me, that he might be indulged in the hope of being reinſtated in the good opinion of an angel, whom he ſaid he had blaſphemed—gave as a ſmall pledge of his ſincerity and truth that he had anxiouſly cancelled Frederick's every debt—had been the guardian of his honor in his abſence; and laſtly, would himſelf meet them on the heath—at leaſt ſend his carriage and his ſervants armed to conduct them ſafely to his ſeat!—their eyes ſparkled; the mixed paſſions of joy, ſurprize, forgiveneſs, cordial

dial forgiveneſs triumphed over heſitation and doubt! the predominant was impatience! I ſeconded it; and having no time to loſe, prepared to adjuſt every preliminary to ſet out as early as poſſible next day. I ſent in my old hoſteſs and her huſband. They returned, and came back ſobbing out, "Heaven's will be done!" You may eaſily conceive what had paſſed—Frederick's wife ſuffered moſt—The children were aſleep! We ſet off next morning—We borrowed the turnip-cart, having lined it with ſome old pieces of ſacks and dry fen ruſhes! The females rode in it—Frederick and I walked—my Roſinante, which my old hoſt rode, and his Balaam drew the cart. We were after ſeveral hours, though much ſooner than we hoped for, detected by Lord E——d's ſervants. They hoiſted their flag, having fired a portable ſort of a cannon three or four times; which at

laſt

laſt we fancied we heard! however we ſaw the flag; we made too our ſigns—A ſervant gallopped up full ſpeed—The coachman drove the chariot furiouſly, and met us—We alighted! What a change!—A ſtep into an elegant Hatchet-Chariot with four horſes, out of a dirty, battered, antediluvian turnip-cart!—We could not but ſmile—Frederick laughed heartily; but we were ſoon checked—Oh, Sir! ſaid our old hoſteſs, we knew you would be happy to leave us! yet do not diſdain us, do not laugh at us; we are old, it is true; and to be ſure we are—but yet—Mrs. Frederick felt the rebuke; ſhe ſhed a tear—Frederick ſtepped aſide, and ſaid ſomething which comforted them. Amen! Amen! ſaid they. God grant it may be ſo! We took leave—rather we could not take leave; we ſet off a little abruptly; the carriage did not however move

forward

forward immediately. One of the ſervants led my horſe. We looked back, gave many an adieu! little Fred. cried much; at laſt he fell aſleep. We looked back, and on the moment of their diſappearing, ſighed, Heaven bleſs and reward them!—When ſhall we ſee ſuch again!—Oh that true friendſhip ſhould fly the poliſhed world; and diſintereſted humanity ſhould prefer ſuch a diſmal habitation as that at Nibbs's on the Arabian Deſert!—Our reveries at length were interrupted by the noiſe of bells—we ſaw many people come out of curioſity, many out of affection for Frederick—more out of reſpect to their good 'ſquire, walking towards us. They joined and eſcorted us home to the beautiful village; and we arrived at length at Lord Edmund's! I paved the way for them. Heavens! what muſt have been

Frederick's

Frederick's ſenſations! His wife's hand trembled exceedingly! We were uſhered into the drawing-room by miſtake —Lord Edmund was in his ſtudy—I knocked at the door — he himſelf opened it. My friend, (exclaimed he) my friend, indeed! He ſhook my hand—his ſilence expreſſed the reſt! Prepare yourſelf, my Lord! ſaid I—I ſtepped into the dining-room, and thence introduced, in my right hand, the lovely Mrs. Frederick, her huſband in the other. They ſat down—Lord Edmund ſat down—ſaid nothing—there was a pauſe—he aroſe, and with a moſt graceful humility, yet conſcious dignity, made to Mrs. Frederick the moſt expreſſive bow I ever marked—It ſpake—It intreated—It effected every thing! To Frederick, he preſſed one hand on his heart, and with a face of contrition ſincere, but an eye proclaiming the diſdain of any thing like fear, with the moſt

moſt majeſtic frankneſs, gave out the other! Frederick was about to ſeize it —Lord Edmund retracted it, and ſat down.—He aroſe, and then addreſſed himſelf to Frederick's wife—"Madam, it is the prerogative of Heaven to forgive a penitent!—I will not ſhock your delicacy, by recapitulating what has paſſed!—It becomes me not to be loquacious.—O thou moſt injured lady! let ſilence itſelf plead my cauſe, and hope for forgiveneſs; ſince words cannot half expreſs, half what I feel, how much I have wronged you, or adequately define the ſmalleſt portion of that agony which has deeply, deeply emaciated me, ſince I have been the innocent cauſe of inflicting a painful bluſh on the cheek of modeſty; and of ſtabbing virtue to the heart, by expreſſing a doubt of her intrinſic, eſſential, eternal purity, reſident in the wife of Frederick! Bliſtered be my tongue,

tongue, blaſted be my honor, (dearer than my life!) be my name enrolled in the black liſt of cowardice, falſehood, and villainy! may I be chronicled as a monſter of iniquity; may I die unrepentant and unforgiven, if my humiliation come not from my heart; if my contrition be not ſincere! Madam, (ſoftening his voice) on my knee I beg your pardon—I pray you to forgive me! I wait till you ſhall honor, ſhall bleſs me with an anſwer! Is it poſſible you can forgive me? But how, Mr. Frederick, how ſhall I addreſs *you*, whom I have ſo deeply, ſo doubly injured, and nearly murdered!—But you are a man—you have the feelings of a man! The obdurate and courageous never meet in the ſame perſon,—cowards only are cruel—the truly brave are ever merciful! But, Oh! it is the bleſſed privilege of the injured alone to forgive! Mr. Frederick, I beg your

your pardon. My hand I retracted juſt now becauſe I was not worthy of yours—the offer of your hand now will flatter me indeed! will convince me I have obtained my wiſh! Lord Edmund retreated, much agitated, to his ſeat! Frederick ſeized his hand; his wife wept her forgiveneſs, ſhe could not ſpeak it; they embraced—the ſcene needed no repetition, it was complete! What were my feelings! I ruſhed out, brought in little Fred. and his ſiſter to lord Edmund. *My* little boy! ſaid he—*my* little girl! He kiſſed them fervently. Ye are my priſoners as long as ye live—as long at leaſt as minced pies, ſaid he jocoſely to them, are in faſhion!

"I thought at laſt I might ſpeak, to the purpoſe—A minced pie, my lord, is— but I ſuppoſe your lordſhip has dined? Oh, ſaid he, true, true; I had

loſt my appetite; but your hint has whetted it; let us to dinner! The bell rang in ten minutes. Little Frederick and his ſiſter were tired; they went after a ſhort refreſhment to ſleep. Mrs. F. returned, we ſat down; and whether it was partly through mental irritation, or not, I could not tell, but we were ſo much in earneſt, that I hoped the butler had ſecured ſomething extraordinarily ſubſtantial for the kitchen. How delicious our repaſt!—a feaſt for the mind, a deſert for reflection! We drank freely, we ſat up late—nor did little Fred. and his ſiſter, after a nap, loſe their ſhare of the good things. They could not but heighten the ſcene and endear it!—The domeſtic joy was univerſal, our happineſs unlimited, indeſcribable, it could only be felt! We at laſt embraced each other once more, and retired to reſt. We hailed each other next morn in unuſual

ſpirits

ſpirits at breakfaſt—every one ſurpriſed, his dream (for it appeared ſuch, at their firſt waking) realized! and ſo happily ſubſtantiated!

"Afternoon Lord Edmund ſummoned Frederick into his ſtudy. Thank Heaven! ſaid he, I can now ſpeak to you without a preface—May I take the liberty to *command* you, Frederick? My Lord (ſaid he) I am yours! The houſe then which you once tenanted, I have given orders to my agent to fit up according to your dear lady's taſte—I have made it over to you, to her, and your heirs! My Lord! I inſiſt, (ſaid Frederick) I inſiſt on paying you the ſeventy pounds—on my honor I will! You ſhall, you ſhall, returned lord Edmund, and on my honor I accept it moſt unequivocally, and will give you a proper diſcharge! but it is right I ſhould do any thing,

except a baſe action, with my own. I ſhall then build (I have begun it ſome time) a little temple to Flora—the ſhrubs and flowers both exotic and indigenous, are all ready, except thoſe I expect from town the latter end of this month. If Mrs. Frederick will condeſcend to take care of them, (I well know her taſte and partiality) I ſhall think myſelf much indeed indebted to her! There was no reſiſting this. Frederick bowed and frankly accepted it at once. "My Lord, I am proud to be a debtor!" So, ſays he, you ſhall be, but to me only as long as you live! Frederick ſtared; Lord Edmund ſmiled. Come, my friend, ſaid he, puzzle yourſelf no longer—The environs of this village muſt be your jail—I am your keeper; and if you break looſe from me, no one elſe has any demand againſt you. Frederick eaſily comprehended him. Generous man! ſaid he, it is too much!

much! My Lord, I find I cannot eſcape you—we yield ourſelves your priſoners! Thus ended the diſcourſe.

" My Lord turned gaily round, and joined the family-party in the garden. We talked of indifferent things; and our minds relieved of their ſeveral burthens, we began to ſmile, to jeſt, and to enjoy the lively ſcenes around us—Ruſtic addreſſes, welcomes, &c. were continually preſented to Lord Edmund—the bells rang—bread was diſtributed—a public fete was given to all his tenants—the jubilee was univerſal! Was ever great man ſo bleſſed! was ever village ſo happy! The day was looked on as the faireſt in the year: the old valued it as their laſt, and the young calendared it in their memorandum for ever!

"In this delightful village I lived, my dear Major, ſix weeks. If you cannot gueſs how happy I muſt have been in ſuch a ſociety, I will not (after ſo long a letter) attempt to expreſs it! The firmeſt friendſhip rivetted Lord Edmund to Frederick—His children were preſented with the fee-ſimple of a well-conditioned farm, on this ſtipulation, that Frederick and his wife would manage it for their benefit, and that old Noah ſhould continue their chief ſhepherd till he died.——The air ſtill did not agree with my health—time paſſed very, very rapidly; the day of my departure was at hand, was fixed, it came! Ah! Major! what did I not undergo! Spare me the recital—I was obliged at laſt to tear myſelf from them, and ultimately, by a ſort of deceit, ſtole away from Paradiſe! Lord Edmund ſent by me an handſome pecuniary proviſion for my old hoſt and hoſteſs on the heath,

which

which I took, and engaged to deliver with Lord Edmund's kind reſpects, and promiſe, if I could prevail on them to end their days in his village, he would himſelf ſuperintend their comforts, and protect them while he lived; and after his deceaſe reſign them to the care of Frederick, his wife, or their children! I ſaw the good old people once more, ſtayed with them two days, fulfilled my commiſſion, made my overtures. They were, however, (they ſaid) too old to move, or be moved—they waited patiently their ſummons to heaven, and wiſhed now only to die in peace! I left them only a few paces, but I returned to ſhake hands with them once more—It pained me that they ſhould think I left them abruptly; yet I could not ſtay for ever!—At laſt I bleſſed them both, left them in tears, and ſighing, departed!!!

"Adieu, my dear Major! you are indebted, for this long hiſtory to an indiſpoſition which has detained me here two days and an half; much longer than I expected. Writing to you has relieved me much—Adieu! to-morrow I ſet out on the old church-account. Heaven knows what, or whom I may meet in my travels—You ſhall hear from me again—

"Adieu! once more,

"Yours, &c."

LET-

LETTER VI.

A clerical Tippy Bob! a finished character —No affectation; Oh! no, not the least —An unfortunate, ridiculous, mistake —A bargain—Something like meanness —The danger of a gratis advance—The Duchess of Q—y, and her lovely friends —How little do we know the real opinion certain people entertain of us, judging by their exterior treatment!—The Duchess explains a mystery—A slight touch at a late V——y—Clerical jealousy—An adieu to the ladies; such who could quit without a tear, or without loving.

" Dear Major,

" I SAW advertised for a curate, An " *able-bodied* " man wanted, immediately. It is singular that little inter-

val has paſſed between my rejection of one curacy and acceptance of another.

" The rector was a young man of fortune, who had been ordained prieſt little more than a year—a ſort of premature ſprig of Divinity, of the ſpecies of *Tippy Bobs!* He had been an intimate friend of C. R. lately a chaplain to the Biſhop of D—y, who as he courted his lovely ſiſter, would not bear too hard on the *intellects* of her brother. I muſt mention an anecdote of this examining chaplain — He plucked two well-diſciplined, and well-informed, but moſt diffident candidates, *becauſe they could not tell who laid the firſt ſtone in Jericho.* They were ſent by him back to " read " again. The B—p of S——y, more diſcerning and more liberal, admitted them both, after their having paſſed a fair, but ſome-

what

what a ſevere examination, with moſt *marked approbation!*

"The Rev. Tippy Bob came off, however, with "flying" colours, as you would have thought, had you ſeen him poſt it out of the cathedral to his ſiſter, on a well-bred hunter, to P——d Place, C—— Square. On this gentleman I waited.—With a liſping ſmirk of placid ſelf-conſequence, and a ſort of tiptoe-jerk, as he approached me, Pray, Sir, ſaid he, be ſeated — You detect me in a moſt horrid, nay the moſt horrideſt diſhabille! — May I preſume to ſolicit you to indulge me an inſtant, while I doff my robe de chambre, and dreſs un peu, that I may be, after that, your's moſt devotedly, without a tittle, an iota of interruption.—He went out—he at laſt returned (his hair was of the flaxen kind, en papillotes, with yellow ſlippers on, tied with ſome lilac ribbon which

"Nancy gave him," in a pair of white ſilk ſtockings, with blue french-ified clocks) So, Sir, I am at your ſervice; and think myſelf moſt highly honored by being called on this morning, ſo early, by ſo reputable a divinity! (it was, Major, half paſt twelve o'clock) I fear, Sir, ſaid I, I interrupt you prematurely! Not at all, not at all, my deareſt Sir! I have juſt *breakfaſted*, though but indifferently. Matilda makes ſhocking tea; I never ſhall teach that idler to reduce Bohea under any decent ſubordination. Apropos! Have *you* broken your faſt? Yes, Sir, I have taken an early dinner—Dinner, Sir? Yes, Sir. I was up very early this morn, and have ridden a great way.—Tant mieux, ſaid he; it muſt have edged your palate with a moſt reputable penchant! We dine in the evening here; ſo that you can at leaſt *ſup* with me at ſix! Sir, you do me,

ſaid

ſaid I, much honor! But, Mr. Rector, (for his affectation gave me half an emetic, and made me very impatient) may I preſume now? True, true, true, good Sir! (ſaid he) I forgot, I am a very abſence! The young Ducheſs of Q——y calls me always Abſent Launce!—Let us to—to—to (taking a pinch of ſnuff moſt exquiſitely perfumed, and impregnated with otto of roſes, yet not ſuffering it to come nearer his face than ten inches, and then only looking at it *obliquely with his left noſtril)* to buſineſs—Buſineſs muſt not be neglected—Pardon me, I am a very abſence! Lady Leonora, Lady Clementina, and *my* little Ducheſſe (as I told you) are continually dunning me on my abſence—hah!—eheh!—hah!—hah!—eheh!—(D—g you, perhaps, ſaid I, ſecretly, in your preſence) Buſineſs, (continued he) muſt not be neglected, is my ſpecific maxim—and there-

therefore that it may be well done, done comme il faut, I rejoice in accepting *you*—(I bowed) Sir, what is the price of "the market?" (I ſtared) I mean, Sir, curacies!—They are not well paid, I know, and I ſhall be happy to conſider them *decently*. I mean to raiſe them from 60*l*. to 65*l*. per year (the living, Major, netted 639*l*. 10*s*. 10*d*. per year). But you muſt work hard, yet not run too briſkly over the turf. I muſt have twenty-five minutes afternoon, and what you pleaſe above ten, morning ſervice. Mr. Rector, (ſaid I) as *your* repreſentative, I muſt of courſe do my beſt! Sir, ſaid he, I ſhall certainly *try* you—I love to encourage the clergy—Your *addreſs* I doubt not—but your *dreſs*? You have forgotten your Sunday coat. Sir, I have no other. Then, ſaid he, do—I—laments—moſt—inordinately, for my pariſhioners' eyes as well as ears muſt be

be gratified; they never take their eyes off *me!* Much depends on the outside—the platter should present an agreeable vis a vis—yet, Sir, entre nous, to tell you a secret rather abruptly and confidentially, I am not "well" with the unfashionables, it is a positive fact, in my churches. I told, nay I complained to Lady Leonora, Lady Clementina, and the Ducheſſe, of it—They ſaid they wondered vaſtly, very vaſtly, at it—but the "vulgar (I *comforted* them by ſaying ſo) have no taſte!"—Yet am I (continued he) very attentive; for I indulge them myſelf every Sunday fortnight.—You muſt know (entre nous) I hate the job; but neceſſity has no law, and I muſt not hide my talents—Apropos! ſaid he, (looking at my coat, and ſeeing a hole in it) I can rectify that indiſcretion!—I can *ſuit* you—eheh! eheh! I intended on Eaſter-day to have given my

my oſtler a new livery. I always dreſs *my* clerks, you muſt know; they are a ſort of "ſecond-hand clergy," I reckon! Now, Sir, I lately diſabled at the B——d Coffee-houſe, and at the rooms at Bath, on my late excurſion, three very new coats, (this is, entre nous, my friend) they are made on the tip of ſtiliſh propriety, and tinctured with the eſſence of ſuperlative faſhion; yet for you may be reduced to humble and ſubordinate gravity, and made to fit you, comme il faut, by my clerk himſelf, who, though not a very famous "Amen," is avowedly a *gentleman* of the ſhears! Now, Sir, if you will appear in them on duty, in the beſt on Sunday, the two others three times in the week, as your diſcretion ſhall ſuggeſt, I think we can ſplit the difference in our preſent adjuſtment of neceſſary preliminaries! (poor gooſe! thought I—I ſcorn to rob thee! beſides,

ſides, my dear Major, my plan is to dreſs, you muſt recollect, *poorly*, and as a *diſtreſſed clergyman*). Thus, then, aye, thus, (ſaid Tippy Bob, bearing delicately his right cheek on his thumb, and preſſing his forehead with the tip of his firſt finger, ſlightly, ſideways, and looking down with an oblique ſatisfaction, on a moſt beautiful ring and a very white hand) thus, aye thus, Monſieur Curè, it ſhall be!! As you appear not to be overburthened with caſh, you ſhall *work out* your cloth, and at the end of the quarter I will give you the difference, either by draft on the banker here, or *my* Drummond in town. I was, Major, ſurpriſed at his meanneſs, as much as chagrined at his inſolence; I bit my lip, and turned pale with indignation; but conquered myſelf—I was ſilent, but gave this ſilence an air of balancing matters, ſo that he did not diſcover me!

me! A lad led up my horſe, as ſettled between us, over his lawn; he rang the bell in agitation, George, Harry, William, Matilda—tell thoſe d——d fellows I will buy no more dog-horſes! pardon me, Sir, for ſhocking your eye-ſight; theſe Hottentots have no diſcrimination, no taſte, no delicacy! The lad ſtill advanced reſolutely. Sir, ſaid I humbly, half ſmiling, that is *my* horſe! Pardon me, *Reverend* Sir! (laying a ſtreſs on the word Reverend) —Is it poſſible? I have loſt my Dolland opera glaſs, and do not ſee clearly; but if it be poſitively ſo, I can ſet you up.—Your Roſinante is on the pinnacle of ſtarvation—(indeed corn and hay are, they tell me, exceſſively dear!) I will ſend him into the Ducheſs's park; ſhe *gives me* as (entre nous) a ſingular favourite, a run! But as, of courſe, you have too much ſpirit to ſuffer me to mortgage myſelf on *your* account,

account, whom as yet "nobody knows," the keep of your deſperado (ſaid he, ſmiling) ſhall be but added to our old account; the cloth, the graſs, the horſe, and ſermons, can be adjuſted, and deducted for at the ſame time.

"As you pleaſe, Mr. Rector; (ſaid I, bowing) but my garment, if bruſhed clean, and mended adroitly, (if he will do me that honor) by your clerk, will anſwer, at leaſt, for my *firſt* month's appearance!

Well, well, (ſaid he) it looks modeſt—You ſhould not aſſume too much at firſt; beſides, the pariſh-ſurplice (ſaid he) will cover a multitude of ſins, I mean ſins (ſmirking at the jeſt, and diſcloſing, I muſt own, a moſt beautiful ſet of teeth) in your old coat—So, Sir, (ringing for ſome refreſhment for me, and yawning) we have agreed,

agreed, I preſume, on the whole! Have you any thing extra to favor me with? Nothing, Sir!—Then, Sir, (for my little Ducheſſe is exact) we drive, we range the park with Lady Leonora, and Lady Clementina, in thirteen minutes—no, this watch does not tell true, though it be truant, (eheh! eheh!) my left one ſays eleven minutes at the lateſt: ſo, adieu! ladies muſt be obeyed. Adieu! forgive my impatience!—Adieu! they will ſee you next Sunday, as on week days they are *always* engaged! I am inſtantly after off to Bath or town, where I am wanted to-morrow early, very early.—Adieu! Uſe the moſt affectionate, delicate, inſinuating, affable, courteous metaphors in your addreſſes from my pulpit—Adieu! Sir.—Finally, adieu! Saying this, he jumped up, and whipped off two little white cropped grey ponies in a whimſical phæton, and pulling

ing off his glove, kiſſed his hand rapidly, darting the "brilliant incumbrance" (as he uſed to call it) full in my face—Ad—adieu! Eheh! eheh! adieu!

"I ſaw no more of him; though I called to ſup with him at ſix. The ſervants ſmiled, "Sir, my maſter is too abſent, too full of engagements; he has forgotten his dinner." Shall we—Sir?—No—no, William—I thank you kindly.

"I retired to the Lamb, where rage helped me to maſticate (ſometimes a little irritability does us no harm) as tough a beef-ſtake as B—— e'er cut off, or Morſden devoured!

"So paſſed my dinner.

"Next

"Next morn Tippy Bob "was off;" and it being a particular day, I entered on ſervice. A very large congregation, whether aſſembled out of curioſity, or from other motives, I knew not, ſurpriſed, and a little intimidated me. I performed ſervice, I confeſs it, in the beſt, moſt pleaſing, perſuaſive manner I could. The day happened to be the moſt ſolemn in the whole year: I was aware of it, and ſelected—preached—my beſt ſermon for the occaſion—But alas! *he was not* (I heard afterwards) *uſed to give them a ſermon!*—Alas! that *gratis* diſcourſe of mine (Major) was eventually the ruin of me, as his curate!—I had the ill fortune to gain the hearts as well as ears of my audience! I was aſked that very evening out to the houſes of ſeven families! The next day I was ſurpriſed after my walk with a profuſion of viſitors by card, and received by one

one o'clock a note in the moſt familiar and friendly, yet poliſhed and reſpectful terms, to dine at the Ducheſs of Q——y's—with whom do you think, brother? with Lady Leonora, and Lady Clementina. Never did I paſs ſo pleaſant, ſo happy a day; zeſted by the elegant attention, the unreſerved vivacity, and well-bred comfortable chit-chat between three of the moſt lovely women I ever ſaw!

"We walked after tea up and down a zig-zag ſhrubbery—I was in Elyſium! On taking a turn or two, we reſted on a very large oak that was cut into four ſeats—I ſat almoſt oppoſite them. On a ſudden I perceived the ladies wink, ſmile, then titter ſecretly. I know not why, I bluſhed!—there was a myſtery I could not unravel! At laſt, the lovely Ducheſſe took the lead. Sir, we are rude damſels, I fear you will think,

to

to ſmile in your face, and not reveal inſtantly the ſecret which *obliges* us to it.

" Know then, Sir, we are a little jocoſe on *your* Rector; we are not ſevere like ſome old maids, but we cannot help now and then being pleaſant at *his* expence! a little harmleſs ſcandal is a female prerogative! (here they to be ſure ſomewhat freely did dreſs up my Tippy Bob in his true colours! how little, ſaid I to myſelf, do we know others' real opinion of us!) We rather *ſuffer* than admit him; he is our dread, our thorn, our every day bliſter, our court-leech, our—what you will!—he never ceaſes to *oblige* us with his agrements as he calls them! he haunts us—we have long ago baniſhed him—but he will not take a hint, or cannot—he out-does us in affectation and in fripery! The pariſh is diſguſted with

his

his professional exhibitions!—His affability, his courtesy, his romantic language from his pulpit, has often made us blush!—but his vanity is as incorrigible, as his company is insupportable! Yet, alas! we must admit him, as he had the good fortune to spoil his cloaths in jumping in after our old family nurse's favorite lap-dog, which fell down the cascade into the river last summer.

"What is done cannot be undone; and we are *eternally* his debtors.—Sir, said she, without compliment therefore, we cannot but congratulate ourselves in having obtained a man of sense—yourself, as our clerical supervisor, and one who, if ladies may presume to judge of theological discourses, and elegance of professional language, we sincerely hope will do us the favor to reside amongst us; and whose stay

we will endeavour to make as pleaſant as we can.

"My dear brother, I bowed low, and like a fool, as ſome may think me, in bowing dropt a tear—I could not help it. They ſaw it—nor did it in their opinions, I have ſince had reaſon to be convinced, diſhonor me at all!

"In return for their ecclairciſſement, I diſcovered to them our mutual articles, or rather thoſe the Reverend Tippy Bob impoſed on me, viz. the reduced ſalary, the old coats, the run in the park, &c. &c. They knew him to be penurious, though oſtentatious; and were not aſtoniſhed. Sir, ſaid they, you ſhall not repent of his having behaved thus meanly to you—We ſay no more at preſent. They changed the ſubject. We walked, we converſed till ſupper time; I ſupped with them,

and

and left them after the moſt delicious repaſt their converſation treated me with! they were not only the lovelieſt, but the moſt accompliſhed women I ever ſaw, or can ſee!

"Happy, happieſt of men, whoever leads ſuch to the altar, and *deſerves* them!

"You will not wonder that theſe angels haunted me all night, as Tippy Bob had haunted them—But how different were my anxious, from their peaceful ſenſations!

"To ſhorten my letter, dear Major, (though the greateſt pleaſure I have is in writing to you my accidents and rencontres) I lived ſome time near them; never ſo happily as when duty and pleaſure went hand in hand in my curacy; perſevering in my line; re-

ceiving the moſt polite encouragement out of church, and pointed attention in it; until at laſt my Rector returned. I received him with welcome—he met me with a face and demeanor *totally* changed. I redoubled my attention, unſuſpectingly, but ſaid nothing—He gave me, abruptly, "warning." I ſaw in his eye a conſciouſneſs of being detected, a feeling of having been ſupplanted, a jealouſy in the moſt bitter extreme of me, his (as he afterwards ſtiled me) "inſolent rival!" I felt myſelf his ſuperior, and looked on the low-minded, little, embryotic pluraliſt, with proportionate diſdain and contemptuous pity: but I ſaid nothing, and left him to work his own way! Having never dared to inſult me; and finding that nothing could alienate the rooted affection of the higher ſort, and the reſpect of the lower in his pariſh, from me, what could he do? bewildering himſelf

himſelf with ſhadowy objections, entangled in mean ſubterfuges, ill-founded accuſations, (*to protect his jealouſy from ſuſpicion*) what could he do? He, it is a fact, Major, leaned on this broken, rotten ſtaff—this barren pitiful crimination; that I had introduced a *new cuſtom* into his pariſh, and inſultingly impoſed on them a ſermon, which even he had never *preſumed* to do, on that day of my exhibition, and manifeſt diſobedience. Sir, (ſaid he) this work of ſupererogation does me much diſcredit, and it will take me a long time to rectify thoſe matters, which you, like the late V——y of I——d have totally deranged! I admitted you without any recommendation, it is true, and therefore take ſhame to myſelf—I acquit you, but have no further occaſion for your kind ſervices, ſuperior exertions, (ſaid he, ſneeringly) and exuberant activity!

" In ſhort, Sir, I mean to order the reins into my own hands; but (taking a pinch of ſnuff in idea) until you can get another curacy in your own country, (where do you belong, Sir?) you may ſtay here, and write for *me*—Apropos—this gratis ſermon, this particularly penetrating diſcourſe, if it really pleaſe the Hottentots, you may publiſh and dedicate to *me*—So I give you, Sir, you ſee, an opportunity to eke out your quarter to ſome decent advantage.—Major, Major, I bit my lip almoſt through—but—

" Some things, and ſome men, (like Dr. Deſperado Sangrado del Teboſo, phyſician extraordinary to the ſenſibility-lady) can only be anſwered by ſilence!—

" I left him abruptly, without taking even what was due to me. I bequeathed

queathed it to the clerk, whom I had a little injured by the ſtipulated diminution, at leaſt, if not robbery, of his *vails!* I left him, dear brother, after church on Sunday. He was engaged out fourteen miles that day—my laſt day of reſidence. I took leave of every one in a "farewell" diſcourſe. I left the church amidſt the wonder of many, the tears of moſt, the bleſſings of all. I looked on them as my children—my family: but when the poor old clerk followed me home, tugging his wife under his arm, who ſaid ſhe would hobble up, ſpite of her *corns*, to ſee the *laſt* of me, I could not help burſting into tears; aye, Major, a plentiful, though ſilent ſhower of them! I quitted my lodging in the evening; and turning my eye on my late Rector's manſion houſe, then on the town, then over the valley into the clerk's little hovel, and laſtly on the church itſelf;

ſaid to myſelf—*Clerical jealouſy, too!* Alas! poor human nature!!!

"I had to ride through the park into the turnpike road—I almoſt overtook the Ducheſs and her two lovely friends. Ah! how my heart ſank within me! I could not ſtop, I might not return; I dared not ride on! they were conſcious of the whole; they had done me the honor to way-lay me.—I began to ſay "farewell!" I could not. Two of them took very quickly their handkerchiefs out of their pockets—the other's was ſomehow entangled—it was the Ducheſs's—ſhe wept! I ſaw ſeveral tears together fall down her lovely cheeks—it unmanned me! (at that inſtant the clock ſtruck the laſt time) Heaven! heaven! the God of heaven! (ſaid I, raiſing my voice, looking upwards, and ſtriking my hands violently together) God bleſs you!—God bleſs you,

you, kindeſt ladies, my deareſt honored friends!—We may meet again—if not here, elſewhere! adieu! ſaid I, ſpurring my nag briſkly; adieu once more, alas! I fear, for ever! but adieu!!

"Ah! my brother, had you met either of her friends, you would inſtantly have ſubmitted half your heart; but had you ſeen the Ducheſs as I have ſeen her, you would have yielded up the whole, for ſhe was (only not quite ſo fair, I think,) like *your* Cecilia!—Good night! write to me ſoon—and tell me your wound is not ſo obſtinate.

"Yours, &c."

LETTER VII.

"Dear Major,

"A SHORT illneſs has checked my inclination — I now reſume my pen. Ah! brother, I cannot get theſe faſcinating women out of my head or heart—I am at leaſt in *platonic* love with them all; and, during my late depreſſion of ſpirit, I have poſitively wept at the thoughts of never ſeeing them again. Alas! I am now an hundred and thirty miles from them!—Heaven bleſs! I muſt endeavour to forget them.

A daſher, one of the right ſort; a character from—The true road to Preferment pointed out—An axiom—A hint to the ladies—An opinion—A viſit—Do ladies ever ſwear? Yes—The danger

ger of liberal ambition, and a diſcloſure of ſuperior accompliſhments—Truth muſt not offend the ladies—A bet propoſed; of what kind—Admitted with lively looks—Rejected inſtantly with wry faces—Why—The danger of ſpoiling a dance—The advantages of being a daſher.

"I am now in C——y, in D—ſhire, waiting 'till a deputy's deputy knew whether he might obtain a curacy in the town; and if ſo, whether he *would* accept it!—We came hither within a month of the ſame time; ſo that there was a little ſort of jockeyſhip between us—he, however, won the heat hollow, who ought never to have ſtarted for *ſuch* a plate at all!—The Rector left the deciſion to a certain family, which I own I exerted myſelf much to ſecure on my ſide—But I am incorrigible; I ſhall never find out, or tread, the

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ſtrait, the certain, *the very road to Preferment!*——To the point.

"This rival of mine was what is called a "Daſher," a ſort of blunt courtier, who was ſuffered always "to have his way,"—of the ſpecies of "Buck" parſons—ſported gaily without a ſixpence—kept on air a brace of good hunters—ſtruck your eye with a long gold chain—cocked his hat high on one ſide when you ſpoke to him—lived in boots—was a devotee to St. Bell—kept a gig and I know not what!—danced well, (I mean not gracefully, but furiouſly)—was a "dead hand" at a cotillion—inordinately attentive to all mothers, that he might ſecure an eaſy acceſs to the daughters—he preſerved the (quondam) clerical ſignature, a crop, and a ſort of ſober black; but as he did not care a d——n for any one, and preached the Goſpel for amuſe-

amuſement, he laid little or no ſtreſs on external formalities! In ſhort he capered, he drank, he ſang himſelf obtruſively into good company, and having an invincible moon face of braſs, and lungs to aſk any thing, he *vociferated* you into compliance; ſo that I ſtood no chance with *ſuch* a gentleman!—He was, however, but on negative terms with the patron and patroneſs of the curacy.—I had reaſon to hope *I* was poſitively favoured. This couple was the moſt unpleaſant I ever endured. He was an ill-bred, vulgar, conſequential, toper—His chief delight was to hear a d——d jolly ſong indeed, ſomething high-ſeaſoned, and that well ſung too by a parſon! About ſix days before the election was to take place, I dined with him—he requeſted a ſong, I gave him one, "My friend and pitcher;"—he turned up his noſe, though I ſang it tolerably well. The

bottle

bottle circulated too faſt for my taſte —I evaded it, however, with ſome ſucceſs. On ſtepping out to ſpeak to my lad, I heard him ſay "What a d——d milkſop that fanatic is; I cannot put him into ſpirits, I cannot lift him over a bottle! he pretended, forſooth, to frown too the other day, becauſe that fine little fellow his rival ſwore a bit or two, though it was only in a ſong at our late turtle feaſt; but I will match him when he returns: we'll have the Ple——, that excellent ſong of Capt. M——, or T. S—n. If the parſon ſneer, I will fine him half a pint "in him or over him!" I returned; the latter ſong was called for, I bit my lip, but ſaid nothing; at laſt, being diſguſted at the beaſtlineſs of it, &c. I roſe up, and left the room, ſhocked beyond meaſure that a ——— ſhould ſing it, at leaſt in my preſence! On my quitting the houſe,

ſaying

ſaying I had a ſudden tooth-ach, I heard a loud laugh, and preſume, by the reiteration of Bacchanalian applauſes, that the gentleman of my cloth had *ſhone* in it, and was encored! Ah! ſaid I, the curacy is not for me then, I fear—my little rival will ſing himſelf into it—ſo let him! Obſerve, Major, that a cheerful ſong, I think, gives a zeſt to the glaſs, endears for a ſhort hour or two of this petty exiſtence, harmonizes, and in a degree even humanizes ſociety; but certainly *there is a point to ſtop at, there is a bar which ſurely no one but Satan himſelf in canonicals would o'erleap!* Major, retain this anecdote, 'till I have occaſion to argue from it; and let me now relate another, which affects the taſte, the delicacy of Mr. C——'s precious helpmate. If he diſguſted you, I think his grey mare muſt ſhock you!

"In

"In the fair ſex, a want of feeling, an atheiſtical indifference to all virtuous ſenſibilities; with a maſculine diſavowal, an inſidious ſmile at the ſuggeſtion of any ſerious reflexion; a faſtidious diſguſt at any thing like a religious obſervation; is almoſt leſs venial than immodeſty itſelf! Any wretched hireling of a brothel, ſeduced firſt by the arts, terrified, perhaps, by the menaces of a villain into an ignominious compliance, but *afterwards* and immediately exiled from hope, and then to the end of her life dreadfully *neceſſitated* to continue in a ſtate of brutal ſubjection and unlimited proſtitution of perſon, is an object leſs unworthy of pity, leſs deſerving the indignation of her own ſex, and the contempt of ours, than that woman, that wife of higher life, who (without any temptation to offend, not under any neceſſity, without any

thirſt

thirſt to allay the heat of, any imperious demand of famine to anſwer, in mere maſculine, virago-defiance of all decency, in vain inſolence, in hardneſs of heart, out of an unnatural, unſexual, diabolical wantonneſs) diſcountenances, with a horſe-laugh, wherever ſhe finds it, the diffident look of morality, and tortures, with painful bluſhes, the face of ſweet religion itſelf!

"This preface leads to a ſecond anecdote, relating to Mrs. C——y, and proves that what in a man I ſhould not too ſeverely notice, or unrelentingly puniſh, becomes in a woman more than abominable:—horrid in the extreme!

"Ah! how different the lovely women I lately left, how different from her

her your poor Cecilia!—You ſhall hear—

"I took tea, dear Major, with Mr. C——y's helpmate; he was drunk, and had quitted the room to ſteal a nap. I was obſerving to ſome of the ladies, that the D—— of Y—— was handſomer than the P——; ſhe denied, with a ſneer, the truth of it. She had never ſeen them together, I had—but ſhe *would* not be miſtaken! She grew intemperate at laſt, "'Tis falſe, Sir!" This ſilenced me for a moment—Madam, I always ſubmit to the ladies! Sir, (exclaimed ſhe, worked up into a violent paſſion, though quite unneceſſarily) the P—— is handſomer than the D—— by "G—d!"—Major, I ſtarted, I turned pale, I ſaid, Ladies ſhould never ſwear! At this ſhe gave me ſuch a look, ſuch a ſupercilious ſneer; ſhe criſped up ſo with diſdain her

her noſe, that you would have thought ſhe had juſt contrived to ſwallow but half down the moſt nauſeous emetic that Dr. Deſperado Sangrado del Toboſo ever mixed up for one of his victims to experiments. Oh! Sir! (ſaid ſhe) you are *too good* for us; you are one of the righteous; you ſtand a better chance to be an under-hack at the methodiſt chapel in L——e Lane, than to ſucceed to our curacy. I bit my lip, and having weathered out my tea viſit, retired.

"You have a brute for your huſband (ſaid I, ſecretly); 'tis well—a being on two feet would have been too good for you!!

"Ah! (ſighed I) Lady Leonora, Lady Clementina, and your amiable Ducheſs!——To proceed—

"In

"In three days time our little election was to come on. How fooliſh was it in me to oppoſe ſuch a rival, who well underſtood the road to Preferment, the Preferment in queſtion! My ill fortune attended me to the laſt—I drank tea again with Mrs. C——y, and the ſame party — An argument aroſe, or rather was ſpitefully introduced by Mrs. C——, who knew my irritability, and felt a ſort of fearful diſlike of one who had ventured, preſumed to oppoſe her. It was propoſed to end our altercation by a bet! I agreed to it (pauſingly) on this condition—*that the whole wager ſhould be laid out, at that diſtreſſing time of the year, in behalf of twelve poor families, which I could ſtrongly and conſcientiouſly recommend.*—To raiſe the fallen, ſaid I, to give bread to the hungry, to comfort the broken-hearted, will be better than— Here, Major, this hyæna

ſneered

ſneered horribly, and, with a malicious wink acroſs the table, ſaid, loud enough for me to hear, You ſee, our over-righteous "would-be" curate will give us a ſermon on charity, I ſuppoſe; I believe, however, if you look at his cloth (here ſhe darted at my old thread-bare coat a diſdainful ſmirk) you will not, ladies, ſuſpect him of being equal to *ſuperfluous* charity—He will ſoon, I propheſy, beg a ſubſcription for himſelf, and pocket what he wiſhed to fob us out of, with "his charity!"—Major, I could hardly contain—Madam, (ſaid I) thoſe who do not ſecond a charitable propoſition, deſerve not the effect and advantage of it themſelves, ſhould the tide ever turn againſt them. I was petrified for that day, through diſguſt and deteſtation! The ladies inſiſted on the bet being well founded, at leaſt that it ſhould ſtand a *bet*—At laſt

at laſt two or three tittered out, A dance!—a dance!—five pounds will buy us a nice ſnug dance—a nice ſnug ſupper! Their eyes ſparkled, they flaſhed the fire of apparently innocent hope, and liberal animation. Ah! ſaid I to them, (Mrs. C——y had left the room I ſuppoſe to cool herſelf) Dear ladies, let us give a dance. Aye, aye, (ſaid they) it is agreed to; a comfortable dance! (their cheeks rekindled with youthful ardor) I mean, ladies, a dance to— the poor!—let us make the hearts of the poor dance with joy! conſider only what five pounds will do for them! Major, will you, can you believe it? in an inſtant their faces fell 80 per cent. one ſneered, the other half-laughed, the other curled up her noſe in contempt of my propoſition, by which I had hoped to recommend myſelf to, rather than alienate from Mrs. C——y's friends—when Mrs. C——y herſelf came

came in! *that* look of hers undid me —I was not a match for them all!

"Alas how unnatural is human nature! how would the lovely Leonora, Lady Clementina, and the Ducheſs have poured forth into my platter, and graciouſly, affectionately condeſcending, even thanked me for my diſintereſted liberality in making *ſuch* a propoſition!

"Ah! how gentlewomen differ from each other!—*Ah! how gentlemen miſtake the road to Preferment!* For, dear Major, on Friday, *merit* was to determine our clerical conteſt, ſanctioned by the good opinion of Mr. C——, and the votes of his fair! Merit (upon honor!) was to bear the palm; and having ſuch a wretch to oppoſe as Mr.—— it was impoſſible that I ſhould not ſucceed againſt him—yet what is the way of the world! how are our beſt hopes

wrongly

wrongly founded! how does perſeverance in the *right* work againſt our advancement! The votes were plumpers againſt me! I was by that ill-bred animal, Mr. C——y, rejected for theſe reaſons; Becauſe I was a ſort of fanatic, ſcrewed up my mouth at a d—d good ſong, though there was no harm (only blaſphemy!) in it, and ſpoiled good company wherever I went—But he would abide by the ladies! Oh! for our little "Daſher!" he is the man for us! ſaid the grey mare—That prim gentleman (meaning me) is a "bore"—he had the inſolence (what a fool he looked at the time!) to cenſure my *mode of expreſſion* the other day, becauſe I ſpoke rather *warmly*, and intereſtingly, which every body does of courſe—it is indeed the faſhion, and we live in the world—Ten to one he will lecture us on Sunday, preach at us all; at leaſt he will preachify againſt ſwearing, if we ſuffer him to

mount

mount the pulpit—but, ladies, what ſay you, my dear friends, to this vagabond's coming amongſt us?—Your votes ſhall decide mine. My love, my amiable friend, (ſaid one) "We do as you do."—We think him a diſagreeable formal fellow—beſide, what a *coat* he wears! it is mended, and moſt horribly out of proportion. Poor Parſon Prim! I ſuppoſe he had not forgotten *himſelf*, in his charitable propoſition! For my part, ſays another, charity begins at home—a bet is a bet.—Beſides, (ſaid the laſt, a little ſapleſs, ſelfiſh, ſneering, ſharp-noſed old maid) *he ſpoiled our dance!* Oh! hang him; none of him—no, no, let us "diſh him" at once. They all ſmiled.—Who, who writes *firſt* to our little good ſort of a nice, amuſing, chatty, *daſhing* fellow, our curate that *is!*—I write firſt. No, I will.—Well, well, we *will all* write firſt, ſo that we diſmiſs at once that

canting diſagreeable fellow who ſpoiled our dance!

" *Ah! Ladies! Ladies! Ladies!*

" P. S. Adieu! dear Major. I ſhall ſoon be tired of my experimental excurſions. Make your own comments on this letter. I forgot to ſay what my very ſilence will expreſs—that I was *ouſted*. I left the town on Sunday morning early, and ſickened not with envy but with indignation on hearing the bells ring in merrily Mr. L—— their preſent curate. He is one of the *ſort*, Major; he is the man for the ladies! he is the man who knows the *proper road* to Preferment! What a dunce am I! Amen! I mean to continue ſo. —— P. S. Mr. L—— they found ſo good a fellow, ſo excellent a parſon, that, as if to chagrin me if I knew it, I heard he was preſented to the living itſelf

itſelf (£400, per year) two months after my diſmiſſion—Poor F—y, the late rector, having died at Briſtol.

" N. B. The Daſher ſang the prophet's ſong, as he uſed to ſay he was *conſcious*, d—d well. Adieu!

" Yours, &c."

Here the Major walked up and down, a few minutes, then adjuſting himſelf nearly as before, Now to my brother's laſt letter! Poor fellow! how he hated a villain in any ſhape. You think he was proud—he was—he never would deſcend to commit a dirty action to brilliant—

LETTER IX.

Lord H——y—His character—The little Fugitive—Her hiſtory—Her addreſs—Knowledge of the world—Arts of inſinuation, previous to ſeduction—The biter bit—The "Splendide mendax" exemplified—Honorable deceit to reſcue innocence—An interview—A propoſal—Its acceptance—Eſcape—Journey—Reward.

"Dear Major,

"I am almoſt tired of the traveller; my old coats are nearly, nay quite worn out; but a new or a newiſh one would, you know, diſcover me. I am now at the delightful villa of ——. A curate was wanted; I applied at the patron's, Lord H—y's. Two footmen uſhered me in; a few words paſſed as to the church, &c. he accepted me without

without heſitation, on condition I did him the honor to dine with him.

" I never ſaw ſo poliſhed a man as Lord H—y! every thing marked him the man of faſhion, in the elegant and ſpecious ſenſe of the word! his deportment was eaſy; his remarks en paſſant ſtrikingly pertinent, proved a mind well ſtored with all the petty articles of worldly knowledge; there was a richer mine within ſtored with more ſubſtantial acquiſitions. In ſhort, he ſeemed deficient in nothing but —— a " *good heart.*" I ſay this with pain, as I never was ſo faſcinated with a man of faſhion before. His ſuperiority, which I could not but feel, yet gave me no pain; his affability, his condeſcenſion, his mental tout enſemble charmed it away, and rivetted you his friend! ſuch a man no one would give leſs than a *plumper* to. Indeed his ſeat he obtained by the un-

bought ſuffrage of the people, whom he had repreſented. He was as accompliſhed as a Cheſterfield, yet— But let me ſpeak of myſelf, brother!

"I lived three months with him continually, and altogether uninterruptedly pleaſant! I ſometimes however ſuſpected the tendency of his arguments; I thought I often detected a ſecret poliſhed libertiniſm in them; that his principles were unſound at the bottom and dangerous; that he was a well-bred advocate for equivocal morality; but had not even the affectation of religion. He was a batchelor. He abhorred a chain that confined him; he ranged at random and without reſtraint, over the Elyſian fields, culled every flower his viſual appetite fancied—plucked it—enjoyed its ſhort-lived fragrance, then caſt it on the dunghill to rot.—Major, in ſhort, *innocence was his prey!* If beauty,

beauty, ſevere in youthful virtue, diſdained his ſolicitations; if honor bluſhed, and reſiſted even the idea of ignominious ſubjection, calling in to the ſupport of frail humanity the *ſuperior* auxiliary, religious principle; yet had he the fatal way of undermining even that rock! He perplexed, corrupted, ſubdued the *mind* of his victim; the perſon too ſoon, alas! too certainly follows!—I muſt relate to you a hiſtory that will keep up your attention, or I am very much miſtaken in my calculation; I muſt preface it by ſaying (my dear Major) that *my* principles, which have taught me to diſtinguiſh between right and wrong, to diſcriminate the ſhameful, the baſe, from whatever is comely, whatever is honeſt and of good report, are fixed, are immutably precious. In the maintenance of ſuch (I truſt, well-grounded) ſentiments I have lived, and in defence of them I would willingly die!

"Come, Sir, ſaid Lord H—y, at our laſt dinner, A health to my "little Fugitive!" Sir, you are a man of diſcrimination, and I know, my friend! I accepted you inſtantly; I ſaw through you; you are above thoſe fanatic preſumptuous niceties, which your methodiſtical ill-bred canters affect—Man is man—you know the world. The Biſhop has at laſt compromiſed with me after four years diſpute, and this rectory is mine, and would have been Mr. George A——y's had he lived to have made, as he intended, a wife forſooth of my own little B——y! To be plain, (for to you, ere I go to town I will *unboſom* myſelf) this little ſkittiſh, fooliſh girl, I muſt have. Her father, late a tenant of mine, is very poor, and very proud; and has educated his B—y not in the tip of true modern faſhion indeed; but has ſo unaccountably contrived the matter of her education, that

ſhe

ſhe (on my honor!) has turned out a moſt accompliſhed girl, a moſt bewitching one; for ſhe has enſnared (though but nineteen herſelf) my old heart of fifty-five! I muſt have her—but marriage is d———n itſelf! She has ſenſibility in the extreme—but the auſterity of her virtue freezes up all the avenues to that heart, which but for that, would have melted, and yielded to my diſintereſted and undiſſembled affection! I have wept, I have knelt, promiſed, proteſted, proffered every thing! Two days ago, I muſt tell you, was the criſis, was *my* laſt interview! She, overcome by paſſion, convinced by my arguments that "happineſs is our duty, a great duty we owe to ourſelves," faultered out in tears, My Lord! (I think ſhe ſaid, My *dear Lord!*) how an union with me would diſgrace you! Poor B——y to be Lady H——y! I frowned, ſhe trembled; I ſmiled, I would not laugh, I

would not diſtreſs her; but frowned again, for I meant to abaſh her preſumption; and—left her! My friend, (Here's however to my little Fugitive's health!) I have made her love me; ſhe does love me, I know, to diſtraction; ſhe cannot but yield—I will (how often have I told her ſo!) not be obliged to *compulſion* for the dear, delicious ſacrifice of her lovely ſelf—ſhe muſt come to me herſelf, ſhe muſt give up herſelf to me; I ſcorn impoſition, and *cannot* (how often have I told her ſo!) live without her! Now, my friend, (come, I will permit you to toaſt her to *me*) ſhe has, I know not why, (women have their prejudices) "*a peculiar reſpect for the clergy*," the well-bred, (bowing to me) I mean! There are two ſorts; ſome are parſons—of which there are a great many, a ſuperabundance—but very few (I ſpeak comparatively) *Clergymen!* Now, Sir, your predeceſſor,

a "*parſon*,"

a "*parſon*," has crazed my little girl's brain! I wiſh you would endeavour to *un*-reaſon with her, and reſtore her to her proper ſenſes! I care not how much I am obliged to you for your good offices! You may call profeſſionally on her any time, as a pariſhioner of yours; it will be reſpectful—*Then*, Sir, plead my love, my ſincereſt unconquerable affection; that though I would not make her miſerable by marrying, (for, entre nous, I have a fickly capricious wife in town) I am dying for her, and her alone! If my dear curate, my gentleman-clergyman ſucceed, you ſhall be my eternal Rector; the living is yours, the preſentation is already made out; my cellar, my horſes, my purſe, nay and (in about two months, I never keep them longer if they breed) my dear little Fugitive herſelf ſhall be yours as long as ſhe ſuits your taſte! Here, my dear Major, a thought

ſtruck me on this palpable conviction, that he was *a villain, out-heroding Herod!* I was abſent a moment; but recollecting myſelf very quickly, ſaid careleſsly, Sir, I muſt now give you a gentleman, Major G——! With all my heart, ſaid he, I love the army, (has he any daughters, Sir?) next to (bowing) the clergy.——Sir, ſaid I, your villa is a moſt pleaſant one; your curacy well-conditioned; the living in proſpect a good ſnug thing—Do you think ſooner than do myſelf the honor to oblige your Lordſhip I would inſultingly under romantic notions of independence quit the road to Preferment, and indecently, ſuperciliouſly, daſh your Lordſhip's church in your Lordſhip's very face? One good turn (I reſpect old proverbs) deſerves another—You are going for a fortnight to town, you ſay: let me turn my talent to your advantage, and if poſſible, for I have perſuaſion, (though

where

where *you* have failed, how can I expect ſucceſs?) try in the mean time to do a friendly action for you, and for her! When you ſee me again, I ſhall have made the little Fugitive no longer a Fugitive—Another glaſs, and a good journey to your lordſhip! I ſhall give you a line as ſoon as I can, at B——d Row—But, my Lord, I muſt have time; this is a work of delicacy, a *neat piece* of buſineſs; addreſs is neceſſary—I have not to attack a cinder-wench, but your accompliſhed B——y! It requires much time and aſſiduity to undermine thoſe antiquated ſtrait-laced notions of maiden honor, virgin chaſtity, with which their grandmothers, if not their mothers, ſpoil and abſolutely deface the beauty of this iſle—Adieu! hob and nob to our ſucceſs—Adieu! ——I had hardly ſhut the door—but—(or my heart would have burſted) Damned, damned diabolical poliſhed villain,

villain, ſaid I—Nerve, nerve my arm, great God, with thy ſword of vengeance, and let me drive to his heart. Poor B——y! thou ſhalt *not* fall! I will ſhelter thee, I will die for thee!"

But, dear Henry, ſaid the Major, let me pauſe; for I feel my brother's agitation— Shall *I* read, Sir? No—no (ſaid he, wiping his forehead with his handkerchief, which was moiſt) no—no—no—let me read on.——Sir, I attend.

My brother writes as follows—

"To lift up the fallen is ſomething meritorious; but to prevent their fall is *ſuperior mercy!* Lord H——y's carriage no ſooner drove off, than I ſummoned the "man" within me! Not a doubt was left, not the utmoſt ſtretch of prevarication, of equivocation, in all it's modes of freethinking, could,

for

for an inſtant, blind the eye of liberal and candid interpretation, ſo far as to extricate Lord H——y from the character of an inſidious, cruel, cowardly villain!

" To fruſtrate thy diaboliſm, to ſhew a monſter, to bare in the pillory of univerſal obloquy and deteſtation this mean and accompliſhed aſſaſſin of innocence, ſhall be my *effort!*

" Aſſiſt me, ye powers of ſubtle ſcrutiny! ſharpen the intellectual eye of ſuſpicious inveſtigation, to probe the heart of poor B——y! but (on the conviction of the ſacred purity of her unſhaken honor) to ſave her inſtantly from daſhing herſelf down the precipice of inſupportable infamy, into the road of unfathomable perdition! Delay is dangerous—Indolence is the cauſe of moſt of our misfortunes—and

in

in this caſe "never too late" is a mad proverb!

"Immediately after dinner, (not that I ate an ounce) *I dreſſed my mind* as well as I could; and, with an heart full of thoſe diffident tremblings, thoſe unceaſing palpitations, with which hope and fear agitate the breaſt of generous honor, when on an errand of peculiar charity and critical endeavour, I tottered to the neat little farm on Mill-Hill, cloſe by his Lordſhip's park near the village. I knocked at the door. Heaven! what were my ſenſations! She herſelf, the little Fugitive herſelf came gaily, ſoftly ſmiling, to the door! I ſtumbled at the threſhold —"Take care, Sir! it is too high. It is *bad luck* to trip on entering, the *firſt time*, a friend's houſe!" Why? Miſs B——. It ſays, Sir, you ſhall be diſappointed of what you come for.

G—d

G—d grant I may not, ſaid I, claſping my hands together with violence (ſhe had ſtepped out to order the boy to ſtop Cæſar's mouth). Madam, I come at an awkward time? Not at all, Sir; in the very beſt time! They are all gone to the fair; and I am, as all old maids are, left at home; and am juſt about to make tea. You look a little faint this hot day; a diſh may refreſh you. I am indeed, Madam, *not a little* faint, ſaid I; I will walk up and down your garden, and return ere your tea be ready. I went out, Major, and, I could not help it, ſhed as plentiful a ſhower of tears as ever woman did; my manhood was quelled within me, I could not help it! I was a truant to my promiſe—The tea was almoſt cold—I had been waited for too long, when I was called by the little Fugitive herſelf, Come, Sir, ſaid ſhe, with that *naiveté* which marked, which

dignified

dignified her character, This a ſecond trip, a ſecond miſtake—You know you gentlemen of the cloth ſhould ſet, in every thing, a good example: beſides, as a gallant, to make a lady wait too! Madam, I ſubmit to your reproof; and *when I give you my advice*, you will not forget to return the compliment? Certainly not, Sir! We drank tea; but my hand trembled ſo that ſhe, with concern, obſerved it! Sir, tea ſhakes your nerves: will you take coffee? No, Madam; this is very excellent Bohea.—I faultered, I turned pale alſo —ſhe ſaw my confuſion—ſhe trembled too. At laſt, Major, I could ſupport the ſecret of my errand no longer—I collected myſelf as well as I could, and ſaid as follows—Madam, I come to viſit you on a particular, on a certain, on a *charitable*— Oh, Sir, (with the ſweeteſt livelineſs, ſaid ſhe) I am glad of it! we need but an advocate for the

the poor! we want only a ſpur in this village! Here ſhe haſtily, with an animation that beſpoke the fineſt, beſt ſenſibilities, drew with the whiteſt hand I ever ſaw, a ſilk purſe of her own knitting, and was in the act of offering a tribute to mercy! I checked her—No, Madam, I aſk not charity for others, but plead *your charity* in favor of *yourſelf!*—Of me, Sir? Why true; we are not rich, but we take care that we may have to ſpare. I ſaved this for a certain purpoſe, with ſome ſelf-denial, I aſſure you. I repeated my laſt words more formally, and pointed them with my look. She ſtared—ſtarted—trembled—recovered herſelf. Sir, you alarm me! but innocence fears nothing—My friends are well, were well an hour or two ago; but ſuſpence of any kind is painful—ſpeak out (ſaid ſhe, in a firm tone) without a preface! The tea was removed

moved—ſhe removed it herſelf. The lovely Fugitive then ſeated herſelf nimbly at one end of the ſopha—I kept my chair. Speak out, Sir, ſaid ſhe; how am I *uncharitable to myſelf?* Speak out, I ſhall be happy to follow your advice; I hope, at leaſt, I ſhall do myſelf the honor, on whatever ſubject it may be, to beſtow the moſt reſpectful attention!

"Madam, ſaid I then, I come a meſſenger from Heaven; I come your guardian angel, your faithful paſtor, and a friend indeed!—Liſten while I relate a truth which I have not long ago detected—A mine is laid to blow up that rock on which your happineſs is built; to blaſt your fair name; lay your honor in the duſt; to ruin you for ever; in ſhort, in the language of the world, to "Seduce you!" Seduce! Sir?—Attend, my deareſt maid, and do not

not interrupt me; my tale is ſhort, as it is important—it concerns yourſelf alone. To be plain, Madam, I am not ignorant that Lord H——y has felt an attachment to you for ſome time, and think it ſcarcely poſſible he ſhould not, ere this, have expreſſed himſelf in the language of "Love!"—She bluſhed. I proceeded—That you ſhould inſpire any man of taſte and feeling with a moſt tender and irreſiſtible prejudice in your favor, I do not wonder; nor ſhould I much wonder, if, with his inſinuating addreſs, avowed accompliſhments, and conſummate good-breeding, (leaving his title and fortune out of the queſtion) he captivated any heart diſengaged from a prior attachment, and made his own the faireſt hand he ever preſſed in his!

"Sir,

" Sir, Sir, ſaid ſhe, by what means I know not, nor preſume to enquire, you have touched a ſtring which gently vibrates with the ſweeteſt harmony on my ears — or thunders the moſt painful, piercing, terrible diſcord through my inmoſt ſoul! Dear Miſs B—— pardon me for enjoining you once more a ſhort but profitable ſilence! Sir, I am corrected, and collected—Go on! ſaid ſhe.

" Lord H——y, then, Madam, I know, has knelt, proteſted, promiſed, proffered every thing, but what a man of true love ſhould ſanction his addreſſes with, *honorable terms*.——That he admires, that he pines for you, I know to be an unqueſtionable truth; but Madam (for time is ſhort and your friends muſt not come ſuddenly on us from the fair) has he ever propoſed marriage? Sir! Sir! ſaid ſhe, ſtarting,

as

as if alive in an inſtant to demonſtration, and electrified by irreſiſtible conviction, No—he has not! Gracious heaven! he has not! he has ſaid he will make me the happieſt of women! Without honor, Sir, there can be no female happineſs! and therefore it follows— Hold, dear girl, it *ſhould* follow, but it does not—It is improbable, nay it is *impoſſible* Lord H——y ſhould make you his wife—he is *married.* Then Heaven preſerve me! (ſhe exclaimed) my poor heart is broken! Here ſhe burſt into tears—pride checked them a moment—I took advantage of that — Madam, Heaven, in it's mercy, has preſerved you! Oh! thwart not it's ſalutary exertions; it's gracious, it's miraculous interference in your favour! Your heart is not broken, though it be wounded—an inviſible hand has reſcued you from perdition, that is, from "Seduction!" But is he

then

then married? (ſaid ſhe, moſt plaintively) happy be his wife! Here her agony was ſo violent, I thought it decent to retire a few moments.

"Ah! poor B——y! while I probed the wound in your heart, I inflicted the ſevereſt pangs on my own. I returned. Compoſe yourſelf, dear Madam, the worſt is over. I am compoſed, ſaid ſhe, faintly. You know not Lord H——y, (ſaid I) he is an avowed "man of faſhion!" he lives for this world; his principles reprobate and ridicule any fear of the next! Truſt him not. To me he has lately, very lately, diſcloſed his ultimate aim, and ſole pointed intent—He means to crop the moſt beautiful flower, I think, that e'er grew in the garden of Eden; and, poſſibly, ere it's ſweets be half evaporated, caſt it off for ever, leaving the next traveller to enjoy it's remnant fragrance,

fragrance, if he ſhould think it worth his while to ſtoop and pick it up!

"Here ſhe fell down on both knees, claſped my hands with a fervor almoſt of adoration, and with a look I never can forget, with a tone of voice which petrified me, half-frantic, ſcreamed out "My ſaviour!" It unmanned me. She then ſtruggled up to my face; and preſſing hard her throbbing agonized boſom to mine, Gracious God (ſaid ſhe) teach me to worſhip thee in the perſon of a creature, whom thou alone couldſt make! I checked her: Hold, hold, Madam! be compoſed. Sir, Sir, (ſaid ſhe, fixing her ſwoln eyes as well as ſhe could on mine) you are, you are— but— Heavens! what am I about!—Oh! Sir, pardon, (here ſhe bluſhed an inſtant deeply, though as inſtantly her face was paleneſs itſelf again) pardon

my indiſcretion!—No, Sir! *I know* I hold, and will not quit your hand, that hand which has ſnatched me from the jaws of eternal remorſe, and reſcued me from unutterable ſhame!

"Now then, Sir, let *me* ſpeak: and though I may expoſe to your charitable conſtruction the weakneſs of a fond, deluded, vain girl, ſtill render myſelf worthy of your future credit, by my inſtantaneous but cool, animated but ſolemn, proteſtations.

"Sir, it is true, then, moſt true, that Lord H——y has paid me an extraordinary and capricious attention. I could not flatter myſelf to make a laſting impreſſion; I never would hope to be Lady H——y; though ſtill I wiſhed, I own, to be his wife. But, Sir, my dear parents have watched him narrowly; their mental eye has never

ſlept,

ſlept, in compaſſion to their only daughter—Yet, Sir, they left me to myſelf; they would do no violence to me by forcing my inclinations, nor affect to bind my honor in a chain which paſſion can too often break in an inſtant. I learned then, very early, to *depend on myſelf*: the means of defence they put in my hands, they nerved my arm; but what more could they do? they taught me to uſe my own ſtrength; they fortified my mind with the beſt, moſt ſacred principles; and *prayed* for my ſelf-exertion, and defenſive ſucceſs!

" I became, at laſt, *ſuſpicious* of Lord H——y; theſe ſuſpicions were too often lulled aſleep: but were never argued away. I ſtill clung to my rock of adamant, and reverted to this unſhaken demonſtration, that " without honor there could be happineſs, and

in love, without marriage, no honor"—I became thus more than ſuſpicious; at laſt, Sir, and very lately, revolving in my mind, the hopes and the fears which, by turns, comforted and dejected me, (Oh! Sir, what have *I not* ſuffered!) I rouſed my mind into action; and though I fear I performed my duty to honor and myſelf very imperfectly, inadequately, and almoſt diſgracefully, reſolved, even if death were the conſequence, and my happineſs ſtabbed to the heart, to probe his to the bottom; and in plain but piercing, in artleſs but affecting, language, undauntedly to put the queſtion, "*Are, or are not, my Lord, your deſigned offers ſuch as a man of ſubſtantial honor, and unequivocal love, ſhould make; and ſuch as a woman of virtue, poſitive, unſuſpected and unſpotted purity, might accept?*" I proclaimed the whole word "marriage"—I, tremblingly, jocoſely called myſelf

ſelf Lady H——y.—Ah! Sir, he frowned, he ſmiled, *but he frowned again!* The ſecond frown undid me, blaſted my vain hopes; and by blaſting them at once, has, I truſt, ſaved me for ever!

"Periſh the baſe heart (Oh! let me yet except that of Lord H——y!) which would ſeduce, by promiſes, the unreſiſting credulity of innocence, and wring with agony the fond boſom which truſts him, by miſleading her, blindfolded by confidential tenderneſs, into the brothel of diſhonor, inſtead of the temple of love!!

"Sir! my meſſenger expreſs from Heaven! my guardian angel! my friend *indeed!* Ah! what would I not do to gain the heart of Lord H——y! his title I would tremblingly accept, but never diſhonor; yet plain Mrs. H——y

(often have I ſaid) would ſound better in my ears! I love the man, not the lordſhip; but, Sir, (ſhe ſpoke this with ſuperior diſdain, and with a changed countenance, which awed me into ſomething like a reverential reſpect) Sir, I would ſooner periſh a martyr in the flames, than apoſtatize from the articles of honor; than kill the fondeſt, beſt of mothers, and bring my deareſt father's grey hairs with ſorrow to the grave!

"May I never be happy, if I barter my heart for wealth alone! but withered be my hand if I ſign a carte-blanche, to my diſgrace!

"Indeed, Sir, you are a meſſenger from Heaven! tell me then, teach me what to do! I humbly ſolicit (for I am but a weak woman, a ſad vain girl) the advance of your ſuggeſtions

and

and ſupport of your friendſhip.—But, Sir, I ſee my father's white horſe trotting over the hill through the grove; it is near his hour; he is punctual. I muſt collect myſelf. Favor me with a call to-morrow at the ſame hour, tea-time. Heaven proſper your reflections! how ſhall I reward you? *Thus*, by this permiſſion, (ſaid I, ſeizing her lily-white hand, kiſſing and preſſing it to my boſom with a moſt affectionate paternal reſpect) will you ſufficiently requite me: but by turning my catechiſm to your advantage, Oh! how much, Miſs B——y, how much will you make me your debtor! Adieu!"

Excellent, honored brother! ſaid the Major, pauſing; but, Henry, I fear I fatigue your attention! Oh, no, Sir! Proceed. I have loſt the place! my eyes are very heavy, ſurely. Oh, no;

(rubbing his forehead) here it is—Thus continues my brother.

"Next day, Major, at about the ſame hour, the little Fugitive and myſelf drank tea. She removed the table, and I communicated my opinions. Dear Madam, ſaid I, ſmiling, I did not this time trip at the threſhold. True, Sir, then I hope you will not be miſtaken in the point, my dear, my deareſt friend, you came on—but give me leave firſt, I am a notable workwoman, to mend a ſeam in your coat, which I ſee is unripped. Ah! my dear lady! ſaid I, I have a better coat than this; but I chooſe to wear this; it is policy; it is a coat of *ſcrutiny*. No more at preſent —Remember, I have a better coat than this. But let us not loſe time; let us to our important point in queſtion. Sir, I am all attention. She pulled the

hapoſ

ſopha nearer and ſat down, while I began—

" Lord H——y is, Madam, now in town; will ſtay ſeven or eight days: I can delay his return, till I have reſcued you from his ſolicitation, his ſeduction! Confiding then, on your honor, nay queſtioning you *on oath* (I muſt, I muſt act thus ſcrupulouſly and ſeverely) that you are equal to the diſengaging yourſelf from any and every vain hope of ever being Lady H——y, by becoming his wife; deſpairing of being that on your own terms, and diſdaining to be a victim on his, are you prepared to accept *immediately* an aſylum from the attack and infection of guilt, by retiring into W—ſhire with me, under the protection of your faithful paſtor and the ſanction of— But, Sir, (interrupted ſhe) recollect I am not an orphan; I have, though they are farmleſs, a father

whom I honor, and a mother whom I will never leave. Madam, you broke in on my ſentence, which I meant to have finiſhed by ſaying, with the ſanction of your worthy exemplary parents.

" Generous man! ſurely the poor alone are noble and virtuous! at leaſt their minds, unfettered by the ſhackles of luxury, undebaſed by exceſs, ſoar higher, and aſſert the dignity, the ſuperiority of human nature, more emphatically than thoſe of extenſive fortunes! I accept, generous man, I accept your offer; but we are incapable of moving, though not in debt! Madam, I underſtand you; but I am equal to all travelling expences.—Sir? ſaid ſhe, looking ſteadily, and muſing on my threadbare coat. Yes, Madam! I told you I had a better coat; and if you will coincide with my plan, in four or five days you ſhall ſee it; your father, mother,

ther, and yourſelf ſhall view my *ward-robe* at D——y Hall!

"Sir, you bewilder me—Am I in a dream? No, my dear pupil. I will prove to you ſoon (pleaſe Heaven!) that this is no romance; though you will, many a year hence, think your *eſcape* one. I wiſh you to relate to your parents (who muſt quit this hill-farm, you ſay, at Michaelmas) theſe particulars! I mean to ſuggeſt the diſpoſal, by private contract, of your furniture, moveables, &c. to turn them into hard caſh; and in the morning, or at midnight, on a fixed day, take chaiſes to L——r, and ſet out early in the M—r mail, which I will ſecure for us four. Your two truſty ſervants ſhall travel outſide, and (pleaſe Heaven!) in a few days I will let you into *my* hiſtory, explain ſome myſteries, put on my own proper coat, let your worthy father have

my farm on his own terms, and for his own time; and having thus rewarded you for your confidence in me, and your civilities to me when curate, glory to the end of my life in having reſcued an honeſt man from under the harrow of an inſolent imperious landlord—reinſtated your aged mother in the comfortable activities of a rural life, with the peaceful enjoyment of its conſequent emoluments—ſecured to an amiable and innocent girl the good opinion of the world, reſtored her to ſelf-approbation, and executed (may I ſay it of myſelf !) a deed of *ſuperior benevolence, and charity in the extreme ! ! !*

" My dear Major, in two days we were all prepared—I took French leave of his Lordſhip, and date this from C——r, ninety-five miles from you. Can any thing add to my happineſs?

Yes,

Yes, that of once more embracing my dear brother!—Adieu! for the preſent."

Letters conclude—Hiſtory draws towards an end—Lord H——y never married—The Major explains himſelf—An important queſtion recapitulatory by Henry—*An anſwer—The Major probes* Henry *to the quick—Detects a ſecret—*Henry *explains—The Fugitive—An ecclairciſſement—The Major's generoſity—Delicacy of affection—An injunction—An immediate compliance—An adieu—Sorrow—Exertion—Exclamation—Death—Adieu!*

SO far, Henry, and no farther, my brother, your honored parent—But, come, the bell rings, and now to dinner "with what appetite we may." Oh!

my

my boy! this (ſaid the Major, ſighing) is his laſt letter; the concluſive hiſtory I will relate after dinner.

They ſat down to a fine turkey, an annual preſent from the Doctor—Henry played an excellent knife and fork—The poor Major did eat little, his wound pained him much. He took three table ſpoonfuls of ſome anodyne liquid, I never found out the name for, it cheered him inſtantly, and the cloth taken away he proceeded.

They all arrived ſafe, except my brother's dear pupil, who was exceedingly ill for two days; the journey had un-nerved her. She recovered, however; health bloomed anew; and their happineſs was complete. My brother new-coated himſelf, lett his farm to the worthy B——y and his wife, perpetuating it to the little Fugitive if ſhe

ſurvived

ſurvived them. The hiſtory of Lord H——y we are ignorant of; except that he was never *married*, and fell a victim ſuddenly to his ſuperannuated exceſſes. So periſh the memory of a man which is not worthy preſerving! His character was not an unique!

My dear brother, your honored father, did not live long enough to enjoy (but, Oh! Henry, how did he enjoy it while he did live!) the dear reward, the conſtant luxury ſpringing from ſuch ſingular goodneſs! He was called away into a brighter field of action! This world hardly ſatisfied his benevolent ambition!—No more of this. Yet, my boy, for I am now your father's proxy, let his memory ever flouriſh; imitate (noble aſpiration!) his virtues as far as you can; revere at a diſtance where you cannot follow him. The laurel leaf which he planted will

ſhadow

ſhadow your head. May my dear brother live! (but why do I ſay I wiſh it?) he *does* live; yes, yes, he is alive, my dear Henry, in you! Here the poor Major wept abundantly.—Could Henry be unmoved? Oh! no. He embraced his father's brother, and the ſcene.... But let me draw a veil reſpectfully over it. Silence can alone expreſs the reſt!

Henry, Henry, at laſt he reſumed, I have acted a hypocrite; I have been as Horace ſays, I remember at ſchool, "*ſplendide mendax*," honorably deceitful; or rather I have acted the part of diſſimulation!—This will do me, I flatter myſelf, no diſcredit with you. I will now be plain—A virtuous and honorable conduct, I had a preſentiment, would reward itſelf; I venerated at a diſtance your footſteps in ſilence as *you* walked *your* road to Preferment! Yours *is* the road; for that is the beſt

Preferment

Preferment which creates moſt happineſs; and that happineſs is, muſt be moſt ſincere, which is conferred by the hand of virtue, and ſuffraged (if I may uſe the expreſſion) by honor! Ah! live in the very principles you profeſs; die in them! thus will you eternize your father's memory, and conſecrate your own. And now, my Henry, my lad of honor, worthy of our name, and your profeſſional title, may you long enjoy the Rectory and eſtate of ——! they are both highly improveable, without ſcourging the induſtrious. May I but live a few days to ſee you inducted to the one, and admitted to the other, I ſhall die contented, (laying my head moſt gratefully on the pillow of reſignation) for I ſhall live again in you!!!

—My dear Major (ſaid Henry, preſſing his hand warmly, and laying it to his heart)

heart) may Heaven grant a few years at leaſt —— No—no—(interrupted he) it will not—Let us quit that ſubject, that unedifying hope; let us change the topic.

The road, my dear Major, ſaid Henry, you thus approve, I will ſteadily walk in, nor ſhall *my ſon*—— Oh! then, exclaimed the Major, with an archneſs Henry was not aware of, You are not determined to die a bachelor!

Henry ſaid nothing; but abruptly aſked a more intereſting opinion, as a ſort of recapitulation.

Do you think, Major, had your brother chimed in with the paſſions, the propenſities, the policies of mankind, he would have riſen, and trodden ſucceſsfully *the road to Preferment?*—*Certainly*, Henry: it is indeed the road, but

but not *your* road, not the road of a "*gentleman!*" It is the road of the meaneſt of mankind—caſting pearls before ſwine, proſtituting every liberality, levelling every diſtinction of our nature in the common ſewer, bartering honor for infamy, and debaſing the man into the brute! *For had* my brother cleaned the ſhoes of the bloated Rector; blackguarded it with the lieutenant; hunted Surly Sam, Eſq.'s hounds; conſecrated (may I utter it!) the remains of a dog; acted the pander to Lord H——y; ſtabbed to the heart the dear angel Fugitive's innocence; and made himſelf "agreeable," as the term is, to the reſt of his patrons or patroneſſes; he would have riſen in the profeſſion, would have been an overloaded pluraliſt, at leaſt a Reverend Rector: certainly would have made his fortune! *but* I ſhould have from my ſoul deſpiſed him; he would have from his ſoul abhorred

horred himſelf; and at laſt, probably, enervated, bloated by exceſs, hated by the liberal world, outcaſt from honor, ſtung with ineffable ſelf-diſguſt, maddened by deſpair, and a repentance too late, would have abruptly decided a miſerable career (begun with the forfeiture of every manly, virtuous, dignified ſentiment) by an act of horror and unwarrantable ſelf-deſtruction!

I tell you ſimply the way of the world—But draw the moral for the benefit of others, which, thank heaven! you never will need for your own.

Here the Major retired for a few minutes. He reſumed his ſeat—Let me, ſaid he, if my wound will ſuffer me, to a more pleaſing ſubject.

I think I am equal to a glaſs of wine—I ſhall not much longer ſurvive my brother;

brother; let me make the beſt of time. Come, my boy, a toaſt for you—Here is to the health of that little Fugitive of *your's!* Of mine, Sir? ſaid Henry. The Major ſmiled inwardly, but looked him kindly full in the face—(Henry turned away as if to look at the clock)—Why, if an old man dare drink a glaſs to a pretty girl, and ſuch a girl; ſurely, a young one— but perhaps you have an objection to my toaſt. He watched him—Henry turned pale, the Major advanced, briſkly, his ſuſpicions, and probed him to the quick. At laſt; Come, Sir, ſaid Henry, I will not make ſo ill a return to my patron's, my friend's, my dear honored Major's parental kindneſs, as to diſguiſe what I have poorly, very poorly concealed—I have not been a ſtranger to the hiſtory of Miſs B——y; I have long loved her in ſecret, and determined never to marry any other

girl

girl than herſelf! I know ſhe is diſ-engaged; yet it may be hard to con-vince her of the ſincerity of man's heart—I have kept the painful ſecret of my paſſion—I was poor—ſhe had nothing. I have honor—ſhe has vir-tue; but to have gained her heart, conſcious of my incapacity to provide for her, I would not in ſecret, even wiſh. I had rather die, than living make her miſerable, by an union which would have been but a prologue to famine, at leaſt want—worldly want! Soon would the god of love have pruned his purple wings, and fled away from the hut of poverty to an happier manſion; and left us to pine in mutual wretchedneſs, and perhaps even mutual accuſations! —— But, Henry, (ſaid the Major, *tempting* him) as ſhe is poor, very poor, and your fortune, I think, a noble one, will it not be more for your intereſt— Intereſt, Sir?

Sir? Intereſt? ſtarted Henry. Come, come, it is enough, ſaid the Major; I will no longer probe an heart which hitherto has kept no other ſecret from me—Fly, fly, (ſaid he, in tears) fly to your Fugitive, tell her you love her, if it be ſo, and her alone; tell her an old fooliſh fond fellow pants, prays for that hour when he may call your dear girl by the honored name of Mrs.——! Tell her— Here Henry, half frantic with joy, left the Major talking to himſelf, ran out of the houſe, and returned almoſt out of breath with his lovely B——. Oh Sir! ſhe is, look Sir! my wife elect!—The Major could not ſpeak; they knelt; ſhe, without ceremony fell on the old Major's neck—Henry embraced him at the ſame inſtant—they wept and enjoyed, to the full, a luxurious feaſt indeed, preſented by the Major's moſt diſintereſted friendſhip, ſweetened by

Henry's

Henry's unbounded gratitude, and conſummated by the virtuous Fugitive's undiſſembled love!

Who was, gentle (and I hope candid) Reader, (for this is the firſt time, in my progreſs, I have pointedly addreſſed thee) doſt thou think, ſooneſt recovered from this delicious trance? — The Fugitive herſelf! — Gracious Heaven, ſaid ſhe, if I cannot ſufficiently thank thee for my *miraculous eſcape*, how ſhall I not adore thee for that it was owing to the hand of my Henry's, my own Henry's, my huſband's father! Bleſſed be his memory! — But, honored Sir, ſaid ſhe, turning to the Major, I fear you will not think me *worthy* of your Henry? I fear, then, (returned the Major) you do not love him? Do I not? ſaid ſhe, darting a look that..... but I will not attempt to deſcribe it. Dear Major, (ſaid ſhe

at

at laſt) doubt me not! I will, that you may not doubt, (for why ſhould I bluſh?) now explain myſelf. The firſt inſtant I beheld your nephew, he ſtruck me as uncommonly like his father; the very image of him! I half yielded in ſecret my captive heart—But, ah! is he married? is his heart diſengaged? ſaid I, ſecretly; or if not, will he, can he ſelect me as the object of his affection? but alas! ſhould he ſelect me, (it is not quite impoſſible) yet poverty damps my fond enthuſiaſm in an inſtant; nor would I entail miſery on the man I love! Yet that another more fortunate girl—ſhould—poſſibly — I could not bear *that* thought! I ſent out, then, on the wing of anxious enquiry, my trembling hope. She returned with a meſſage of congratulation, That he was ſingle, was unengaged!—I had a preſentiment, though ſtill thought it was preſumption, that

he might ſmile on my fondeſt wiſhes —But poverty, Sir, worldly want, ſtared me in the face; I was terrified, I deſpaired, I pined, I retired! yet I loved him. I felt, I ſaw (for it is not eaſy to deceive our ſex) my Henry loved me in return—It ſeemed as if, though we were fated never to marry, we were determined never to ſeparate ourſelves as friends.

Oh! judge then, with what ineffable ſenſations, with what almoſt painful exceſs of aſtoniſhment, and delirious tranſport, I caught juſt now my Henry, my huſband, in theſe arms!—Henry, (ſaid ſhe earneſtly) kneel with me to him, and— Here the Major was overpowered, and conjured them to riſe. Come, come, no more of this; no more of it; for I am but half happy: I have not given away this little vagabond girl to any one who will take her—I have

not

not impoſed a chain on her.—It is ſuperfluous; ſhe will not wiſh to be a Fugitive from you!

Nor (ſaid Miſs B——y, ſprightlily) ſhall you be one from us. Oh! Sir, live with us for ever; accept the tribute we offer of mutual gratitude, and teach us to deſerve you! The Major wept abundantly. Ah! were Cecilia here to witneſs this! He ſighed again, he wept aloud, it was too much—He abruptly retired—Ah! my poor Cecilia!

The ſcene cloſed.

His wound had been extremely painful, though he had concealed his agony. On Henry's returning home ſomewhat late (was it not excuſable?) he met the Doctor coming down ſtairs, who had been ſent for. His face was not inex-

preſſive — The Major grew worſe; Henry ſtepped up ſoftly, he knelt down at the ſide of his couch and watered it with his tears—He muttered a fond hope, and ſighed deeply. The Major heard and rebuked him—Be a man—I am ready—Do you want to ſmooth my paſſage, or plant a thorn in my pillow? Henry was ſtaggered at the queſtion. Is then Miſs B——y *yours?* ſaid the Major. No, Sir, ſaid Henry. I take it unkind then! Oh! my dear Major! ſaid Henry, preſſing his hand, I cannot taſte of pleaſure while you are in pain. I *ſhall* be in pain then, ſaid he (kindly frowning) until you have made Miſs B——y Mrs.——! Deny me not the gratification of my fondeſt, *laſt*, only wiſh.—It is my requeſt, ſaid he, faintly, ſtretching his hand out of the bed, and laying it on his heart, it is my *injunction*, Henry, nor ſhall I (may I ſay it?) be quite reſigned till the bells ring out you

are

are a married man!—Henry inſtantly flew to his little Fugitive, conſulted, decided, led her bluſhing to the altar of Hymen, on which was never offered ſo ſweet, ſo pure a ſacrifice!!

Happy, happieſt pair!

They returned; received the bleſſing of their dear, venerable Major: his eyes ſparkled; an unuſual glow animated his cheeks; he attempted to ſpeak, but could not—At laſt, recollecting himſelf, Henry, I have a commiſſion (I received a letter in your abſence) which you muſt execute inſtantly—The chaiſe is nearly ready—Hark! I hear it coming—You muſt haſten to town to ſign in perſon (better, much better while I am living) one parchment—two muſt be ſigned—one by you and the other by Miſs B——y—(pardon me, *Mrs.*——!) in London, at my Solicitor's chambers, who

who ſent expreſs for your attendance.—"Sir, I obey!" Your lovely wife I will (ſhall I, Henry?) take charge of till you return. No, Sir, ſaid he, ſmiling, I hope ſhe would for once be a Fugitive even from you!—Mrs. —— bluſhed!— Adieu! ſaid the Major; Heaven proſper you; bring the deeds caſed in oil-ſkin—If my wound get worſe, I will write; if not, conclude it is better; and that I can afford to give you at leaſt a week's holidays—Adieu! (ſaluting them both as well as he could) —the boys are ready—Adieu!

Ah! happy pair!
But
Alas! poor Major!

The chaiſe drove off ſlowly (by Henry's order) till it was out of ſight; then rapidly wheeled them to town.

The

The poor Major contrived, though with much difficulty, to heave himſelf aukwardly up in his bed—looked as long as he could through the ſhrubbery "Come back ſoon, come back now!" but when they turned ſharp into the London road, he called out aloud, Stop, Henry! ſtop a moment! I will not rob you of two minutes! pray ſtop! I only deſire to ſhake hands with you once more, and to kiſs for the laſt time, yo-ur lo-ve-ly— He could no more; but ſank down on his pillow, wept bitterly; and in a very inconſiderable time, worn out by pain of his wound, (increaſed by laſt night's reſtleſſneſs, though it was now rather more eaſy) enervated with the execution of this happy morning's ſolemn buſineſs, and exertions, the Major fell at laſt into a peaceful and heavenly ſleep—

He awoke no more!!!

Adieu!

Adieu! thou good, thou venerable old man! light lie the turf on thy grave, moiſtened with the filial tears of thoſe who knew thee beſt!—Deeply and moſt ſincerely ſhall thy friends lament the loſs of thee!—Some ſhall preſume to imitate thy virtues—all ſhall revere them! In Henry thou ſhalt live again!—Thy memory ſhall flouriſh! —His wife ſhall wear thy ſacred lock, bequeathed to her by thee, near her heart!

Their children ſhall early liſp thy honored name; their little hands ſhall weave an

Annual chaplet of regret;
But
Henry and his Clara alone
(In midnight privacy
And ſacred ſilence)
Shall with it
Decorate thy tomb!

MUSEUM BRITANNICUM

FINIS.